Rugby League Silk Cut Challenge Cup: Salford 26 Wigan 16

Unbeatable Wigan lose at last

Paul Wilson

IT HAD to happen one day but increasingly it was becoming difficult to say precisely when. The unthinkable finally happened on Sunday when Wigan's eight-year stranglehold on Rugby League's Challenge Cup was ended in the fifth round by First Division Salford. Wigan might be able to beat prospective Super League teams at will but at The Willows they were up against a determined selection of Central Park old boys.

Coached by Andy Gregory, who won five of his seven Wembley winners' medals with Wigan, Salford also had a reliable last line of defence in the shape of Steve Hampson, a veteran full-back happy to reinforce his claim that the perennial champions had discarded him prematurely.

But it was not just the big names who came back to haunt Wigan. Scott Naylor, a reserve whom even the most dedicated Central Park regular might struggle to remember, weighed in with two important tries in the victory. Another Wigan reject, the stand-off Steve Blakeley, kicked five goals and took the Man *of the Match award.*

There were no complaints from the holders. "I'm disappointed but the better side won on the day," said the Wigan captain Shaun Edwards.

Cup ties are never easy at Salford's compact ground, especially when 10,000 partisan supporters are packed in, but the team sheets still stacked up in Wigan's favour.



Salford's David Young offloads as he is tackled by Wigan's second-row forward Simon Houghton PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD SELLERS

There seemed no way a side boasting the power of Tuigamala, *the pace* of Offiah and Robinson and the class of Paul, Connolly and Edwards could be beaten by a collection of has-beens and never-weres but Salford suggested an upset from the fourth minute.

Young's touchdown from Lee's kick gave the home side a lead they never surrendered, then Naylor took Lee's pass to score another. Blakeley kicked his second goal, then added a penalty and the First Division side were 14-0 in front.

Tuigamala managed a try just before the interval, only for Naylor to restore Salford's advantage early in the second half. Offiah scored to reduce the deficit to 10 points but Salford held their own and put the issue beyond doubt when Martin scored 13 minutes from time.

In the next round Salford will face the new favourites St Helens, who trounced Rochdale 20-58.

Cryptic crossword *by Crispa*

Across

1 Models without work — such shapeless lumps! (7)
5 Leaves quietly in chains maybe (7)
10 Game that's exclusively for males (4)
11 Bear with the little page putting *on weight* (10)
12 Sanctimonious, yet almost making a bit of a bloomer (6)
13 Day's end — flat time (8)
14 Bore takes part free possibly. There's nothing in that (9)
16 Forays made by Roundhead auxiliaries (5)
17 Project to cause confusion (5)
19 The woman responsible for a leading light in the cinema world (9)
23 Bed-sit by the Avon which is barely used? (8)
24 Call for more heart after certain points are put (6)
26 *Grant* horse needs exercising, but not over a long distance (5-5)
27 Off a track (4)
28 A little meagre, yes — that's most depressing (7)
29 Broadcast by drunken outside right (7)

Down

2 Preliminary plan for striking bar (7)
3 Simple form of illumination (5)
4 Common or very far from common in a tree (7)
6 A supplementary note about cereal costs (8)
7 Right name coined for a nasty experience (9)
8 Concentrated, being somewhat dense (7)
9 Men test-drive a convertible for publicity (13)
15 Reckless writer after dope (9)
18 Get to know about the Calluna (7)
20 Section of the Spanish and French taking people in (7)
21 A suggestion to involve the queen causing a row (7)
22 Building up reserves can be so hard (6)
25 Many blame the box (5)

Last week's solution

COALFACE#OBJECT
O#T#A#H###U#V#O
MEALTREE#STRING
P#L#S#S#C#T#L#A
RULEOFTHREE####
O#O###E#O#R#S#D
MORES#ROOTCAUSE
I#D#A#F#K#U#C#A
SHELLLIKE#POKER
E#R#T#E#D###I#B
####SILASMARNER
P#E#P#D#P#S#G#U
LESSON#HIGHSPOT
O#P#O###R#E#I#U
TRYING#VESTIGES

Football results and league tables

COCA-COLA CUP: Semi-final, first leg: Birmingham City 1, Leeds United 2.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Bolton 0, Aston Villa 2; Coventry 1, Chelsea 0; Everton 2, Man City 0; Man Utd 1, Blackburn 0; Middlesbrough 1, Newcastle 2; Nottm Forest 0, Arsenal 1; QPR 1, Liverpool 0; Sheff Wed 2, Wimbledon 1; Tottenham 0, West Ham 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newcastle	25	19	3	3	49	20	60
Man Utd	26	15	6	5	47	29	51
Liverpool	26	14	7	5	50	22	49
Aston Villa	25	13	6	6	34	18	45
Tottenham	26	11	9	6	33	25	42
Blackburn	26	12	5	9	40	28	41
Arsenal	26	11	8	7	34	25	41
Everton	26	11	7	8	39	28	40
Nottm Forest	26	10	10	6	35	35	40
Chelsea	26	10	9	7	30	26	39
Leeds	25	10	5	10	31	37	35
Middlesbrough	26	9	6	11	27	33	33
West Ham	25	9	5	11	27	35	32
Sheff Wed	25	7	8	10	36	39	29
Southampton	25	5	10	10	25	36	25
Wimbledon	26	6	6	14	36	52	24
Coventry	26	5	9	12	33	49	24
Man City	26	6	6	14	16	36	24
QPR	26	5	3	18	19	40	18
Bolton	26	3	4	19	24	51	13

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division: *Crystal Palace 0, Sheffield Utd 0; Derby 0,* Wolverhampton 0; Luton 3, Grimsby 2; Millwall 1, Reading 1; Oldham 2, Norwich 0; Portsmouth 2, Leicester 1; Stoke 3, Ipswich 1, Sunderland 0, Port Vale 0, Tranmere 1, Barnsley 3; Watford 1, Charlton 2; West Brom 3, *Southend 1.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Derby	29	14	10	5	46	31	52
Charlton	28	13	10	5	41	29	49
Huddersfield	29	12	9	8	38	32	45
Southend	29	12	8	9	34	35	44
Sunderland	28	11	11	6	31	23	44
Barnsley	29	11	10	8	40	44	43
Stoke	28	11	9	8	40	34	42
Millwall	30	10	11	9	31	37	41
Ipswich	28	10	10	8	50	41	40
Leicester	28	10	10	8	42	39	40
Portsmouth	31	10	9	12	48	48	39
Norwich	30	10	9	11	40	37	39
Birmingham	27	10	9	8	38	37	39
Grimsby	29	9	11	9	35	37	38
Crystal Palace	27	8	12	7	32	33	36
Oldham	28	8	11	9	37	31	35
Tranmere	28	9	8	11	37	33	35
Wolverhampton	28	7	11	10	35	37	32
Reading	28	7	11	10	33	38	32
Luton	28	8	8	12	28	40	32
Port Vale	28	7	10	11	33	40	31
West Brom	28	8	4	16	33	48	28
Sheff Utd	29	6	9	14	35	47	27
Watford	27	5	10	12	30	38	25

Second Division: Bradford C 0, Stockport 1; Bristol City 3, Bournemouth 0; Burnley 0, Crewe 1; Carlisle 2, Brentford 1; Hull 1, Bristol Rovers 3; Oxford Utd 1, Brighton 1; Peterborough 2, Shrewsbury 2; Swansea 0, Swindon 1; Walsall 0, Notts Co 0; Wycombe 0, Blackpool 1; York 2, Rotherham 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swindon	27	16	8	3	45	18	56
Crewe	26	15	5	6	48	28	50
Blackpool	27	13	9	5	41	28	48
Notts County	25	13	8	4	36	19	47
Chesterfield	26	12	7	7	39	27	43
Bradford	29	12	5	12	39	46	41
Bristol Rovers	28	11	8	9	35	37	41
Shrewsbury	28	11	6	11	38	38	39
Stockport	28	10	9	9	36	29	39
Wycombe	28	9	12	7	35	30	39
Burnley	27	10	8	9	39	35	38
Bournemouth	28	11	5	12	35	42	38
Oxford Utd	27	10	8	9	34	27	38
Wrexham	26	8	13	5	37	29	37
Walsall	26	9	9	8	28	20	36
Rotherham	28	9	8	11	35	41	35
Bristol City	28	8	10	10	28	37	34
Peterborough	26	7	9	10	36	41	30
Brentford	27	8	6	13	24	33	30
Carlisle	28	6	10	12	34	43	28
York	25	7	5	13	29	41	26
Brighton	28	6	7	15	26	43	25
Swansea	28	5	9	14	28	40	24
Hull	27	2	10	15	20	47	16

Third Division: Colchester 1, Wigan 2; Doncaster 0, Bury 1; Fulham 2, Hartlepool 2; Gillingham 2, Torquay 0, Leyton Orient 4, Cardiff 1; Northampton 1, Darlington 1; Preston 0, Barnet 1; Rochdale 0, Scarborough 2; Scunthorpe 1, Plymouth 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gillingham	28	16	8	4	37	10	56
Preston	28	13	12	3	54	25	51
Chester	27	12	8	7	46	35	44
Darlington	28	11	10	7	32	27	43
Plymouth	29	11	9	9	46	36	42
Colchester	29	10	12	7	40	35	42
Doncaster	28	12	6	10	34	37	42
Wigan	28	11	8	9	37	34	41
Northampton	28	10	9	9	30	28	39
Bury	26	10	9	7	30	31	39
Barnet	29	8	13	8	30	33	37
Scunthorpe	27	9	9	9	40	34	36
Cambridge Utd	27	9	7	11	40	45	34
Rochdale	27	9	7	11	36	33	34
Leyton Orient	29	9	7	13	30	39	34
Exeter	28	7	13	8	28	31	34
Cardiff	28	8	8	12	28	36	32
Hereford	24	7	10	7	35	30	31
Mansfield	28	6	13	9	34	48	31
Scarborough	29	6	13	10	30	38	31
Hartlepool	27	7	10	10	29	39	31
Lincoln	27	6	10	11	25	39	28
Fulham	27	5	12	10	33	40	27
Torquay	28	4	9	15	25	51	21

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Falkirk 0, Celtic 0; Hearts 1, Aberdeen 3; Partick 0, Kilmarnock 1; Raith 1, Hibernian 0; Rangers 3, Motherwell 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	26	19	5	2	60	16	62
Celtic	26	17	8	1	45	19	59
Aberdeen	25	12	4	9	38	28	40
Hearts	26	11	4	11	40	40	37
Hibernian	26	9	6	11	34	43	33
Raith	26	9	5	12	26	38	32
Kilmarnock	26	8	6	12	32	41	30
Falkirk	26	6	5	15	23	39	23
Partick	26	6	5	15	18	37	23
Motherwell	25	3	10	12	18	31	19

First Division: Airdrie 1, Dunfermline 2; Clydebank 1, St Mirren 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Dundee Utd (26-46); 2, Greenock Morton (23-44); 3, Dunfermline (22-44).

Second Division: Berwick Rangers 2, Stenhousemuir 1; Stranraer 0, East Fife 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Stirling (23-49); 2, East Fife (24-49); 3, Berwick Rangers (24-41).

Third Division: Livingston 1, Alloa 0; Queen's Park 2, East Stirling 2. **Leading positions:** 1, Brechin (23-42); 2, Livingston (22-40); 3, Arbroath (23-38).

Boxing

HIV scare for Lewis

Don Beet

LENNOX LEWIS, the former World Boxing Council heavyweight champion, has been advised to take an Aids test after hearing that Tommy Morrison, whom he beat last October, has tested HIV positive.

The promoter Panos Eliades, who *handles Lewis's affairs, said:* "We'd better get our man tested. There was a lot of blood in that fight." Most of it was spilled by Morrison, but Lewis's manager Frank Maloney refused to over-react.

Morrison, who was suspended before a bout last Saturday, said: "I understand that there are several people concerned about me. *I am* fine. I feel it would be selfish to ask you to say a prayer for me."

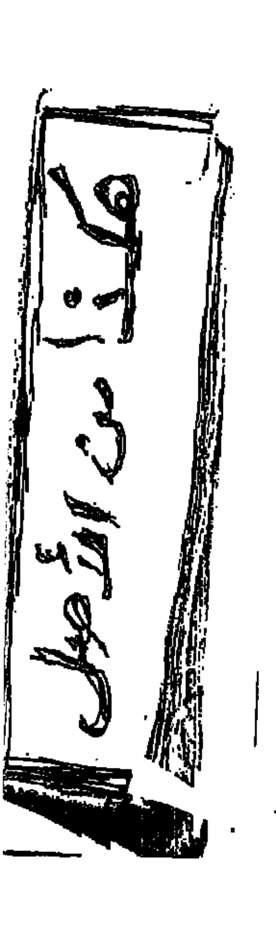
The promoter Tony Holden said: "We were advised of the results before the fight by Marc Ratner, head of the Nevada Athletic Commission. We tracked down Tommy and told him. His reaction was shock and *disbelief. But it's a shock to all of us.* Tommy appeared to be in perfect health. His conditioning was great and there were no signs of anything at all.

"He was tested in Las Vegas before the fight against George Foreman in 1993 and he tested negative."

Morrison, a former World Boxing Organisation champion, had only one test in Las Vegas last week, but the results were checked twice. Saturday's bout, against Arthur Weathers, would have been Morrison's first since he was stopped in the sixth round by Lewis.

Lewis is in Jamaica but his next *fight, against the former* WBO champion Ray Mercer, has been confirmed for New York's Madison Square Garden on May 10. It will be the former WBC champion's fourth outing since he lost his title and unbeaten record to Oliver McCall in September 1994.

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Bomb on bus rips Irish dreams apart

Guardian Reporters

TWO IRA men who blew themselves up on their way to bomb a *high-profile* central London target could have been responsible for the Docklands bombing 10 days ago, police sources said this week.

One of the bombers died at the scene of the bus bomb in the Aldwych on Sunday evening. The surviving suspect was under armed *guard in hospital on Tuesday as* detectives waited to interview him.

Police sources in Dublin said that the injured man was aged 26 and came from the Finglas area of the city. The dead man is believed to have come from Co Tyrone. A 9mm automatic pistol was found at the scene.

Anti-terrorist *branch officers* carried out two arrests in south London under the Prevention of Terrorism Act on Monday as the hunt for those responsible for the new wave of bombings in London intensified. There were also security alerts nationally because the traditional IRA response to an "own goal" is to *carry out another attack* shortly afterwards to demonstrate its continuing capability.

Sunday night's blast was the second incident in London within three days, raising fresh fears of a return to a full-scale campaign of terrorist violence on the mainland.

On Thursday last week police made safe an IRA *device believed to* contain 5kg of Semtex explosives which had been left in a telephone booth a kilometre from Sunday's explosion. On February 9 two people were killed in the Docklands blast.

The IRA claimed responsibility for Sunday's bomb in a call to the BBC in Belfast. The coded statement added: "*We regret the loss of* life and injuries."

The Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, said on Monday that the peace process was over and would now have to be rebuilt. There was no way back from the abyss except through dialogue. "It means a lot of resilience. It means all of us taking risks."

The Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, admitted on Monday that *the peace process was in* "severe difficulties". However, Irish government officials were thought to have met Sinn Fein at a secret venue in their second face-to-face talks since the end of the IRA ceasefire. John Bruton, the Irish prime minister, has banned top-level contacts until the ceasefire is restored.

John Major held a series of "stock-taking" meetings in Downing Street and on Monday night spoke for 30 minutes by phone to Mr Bruton, whom he hopes to meet next week. George Mitchell, the former US senator who headed a commission on Irish peace, was due in London for talks this week, though *officials insisted his visit was* primarily linked to his role as chairman of the International Crisis Group monitoring the Bosnian accords.

Fears that loyalist paramilitaries could retaliate for the IRA's renewed bombing campaign mounted with news that their leaders were meeting in secret on Tuesday to de*cide on a response.*

Only a few hours before Sunday evening's bomb, Mr Adams told a republican rally in west Belfast that he was "extending the hand of friendship" to Mr Major and unionists. "We say to John Major, 'Pull back from the abyss, we want to talk and we want peace but we must *have justice and we must have free*dom and we must be treated as equals'."

The chill response from the Democratic Unionist deputy leader, Peter Robinson, to that offer following the latest London explosion was hardly surprising. "People throughout the United Kingdom will now *see what is in Adams's hand when* he stretches it out and calls for the prime minister to grasp it. It shows that the IRA are not interested in peace."

Earlier, Mr Adams said it was not in his gift to get the IRA ceasefire reinstated, while other senior Sinn Fein figures indicated over the weekend that only the setting of a *date for all-party talks by Mr Major* would see a return to the ceasefire.

Sunday's bus bomb, which was a home-made device and not constructed of army materials, went off prematurely as the double-decker bus reached the Aldwych on its way from Catford in south-east London to Holborn.

The next stop on the bus route would have been outside the Royal Courts of Justice, which houses the Court of Appeal and might have been the IRA's intended target. It seems unlikely that the men would have tried to penetrate further into the City at that time of night as any couple carrying a holdall would have been subject to a search.

Commander John Grieve, head of the anti-terrorist branch, said that what had happened "did not match the normal pattern of events" and the conclusion was that the bomb had gone off in error.

Meanwhile an anonymous group has offered a reward of £1 million for information leading to the arrest *of the IRA bombers responsible for* the Docklands explosion.

Police also carried out more than 30 raids throughout the country last week. A number of people were arrested. Some were later released.

Martin Woollacott, page 12



The twisted wreckage of the double-decker bus which was blown up by the IRA in central London on Sunday PHOTOGRAPH: MAX NASH

UK ministers face pressure to step down

Patrick Wintour and Richard Norton-Taylor

PRESSURE on William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, to resign in the wake of the Scott report into the *arms-to-Iraq scandal mounted this* week as Labour and Liberal Democrats signalled their determination to force the issue in the run-up to the Commons vote on Monday.

The Prime Minister insists that Sir Richard Scott's investigation had "comprehensively dismissed" the most serious allegations against *senior ministers.*

However, a small group of Tory MPs were privately expressing unease at the ferocity of the report's criticism, including the finding that Sir Nicholas was culpable.

One Tory backbencher, Rupert Allason, said the criticisms of Sir Nicholas were trenchant. Sir Teddy Taylor called on the Government to take them more seriously, and Peter Thurnham, the Conservative MP for Bolton North East, has threatened to resign the Tory whip over the issue.

The report will be put to a Commons vote on Monday, at which the votes of the nine Ulster Unionist MPs may prove critical, but the Opposition believes that even if no ministers resign, Labour will still benefit, pointing out that a telephone poll last week showed overwhelming support for resignations.

In the wake of the Scott report, which marked the culmination of a three-year investigation, Mr Major promised some low-key changes, including better dissemination of intelligence information.

Scott report, pages 10-11

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Ireland says peace with rallies and ribbons

David Sharrock in Belfast

A PEOPLE'S campaign in Ireland against a return to violence caught fire last week with a series of big events on both sides of the border which brought tens of thousands on to the streets.

A huge demonstration was organised in Belfast by trade unions last Friday, and the Irish foreign minister, Dick Spring, launched a white ribbon campaign in Dublin. Some 25,000 were distributed in Paris at last weekend's rugby international between Ireland and France.

Tens of thousands of people rang a "peace hotline" set up by three daily and two Sunday newspapers to register their opposition to violence. And Gavin and Margaret Walker, a Northern Ireland couple from Bangor, Co Down, distributed to politicians the 100,000 letters and cards opposing violence which they had been sent in the space of a week.

Mr Spring said the white ribbons — similar in design to the green ribbons worn by Irish republicans seeking the release of their prisoners — were made available at post offices and other public buildings throughout the south.

"Last Friday was one of the darkest days we have had for a long, long time," he said. "The vast majority of people on this island, north and south, want peace, and they want to get back to the peace they had . . .

"White is the colour of peace. We have to show our frustration at the way peace has been ripped apart . . . There are people out there who still feel that they can resort to violence, and that they claim to speak on behalf of the Irish nation or the Irish people. That is so far removed from reality and the truth, and they should be sent a very strong message."

Later, Mr Spring handed out ribbons to people thronging Grafton Street, Dublin's premier shopping area.

All television and radio channels operated by Ireland's RTE broadcasting network observed a minute's silence at 12.30pm to coincide with the peace rallies. A string of demonstrations in towns and cities across Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic were organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Spanish rally, page 4

A loud explosion of grief and anger

MY HOUSE was rocked by the bomb in London's Docklands. The people of London are not prepared to carry the burden of unionist intransigence any longer. The British government, under pressure from the unionists, has spent the last 18 months throwing up obstacle after obstacle to serious negotiations over Northern Ireland.

The reason is equally obvious: any negotiations must involve compromise, and that means some weakening of unionist power. The unionists are not prepared to cede an inch, and have successfully blackmailed the Government into playing their game.

We owe the bigots of Northern Ireland nothing and it's time we got rid of this expensive colony, just like we've got rid of dozens of others in the past 30 years.
Ken Jones,
London

THE predictable debacle of the Dockland's bomb has its origins in two massive pieces of misjudgment. The first was by IRA/Sinn Fein in not making at least a tiny concession in the decommissioning process. They could have re-armed without the slightest dificulty.

The second error of judgment was by the British government in not accepting the main findings of the Mitchell Commission in relation to decommissioning. It was a respected and independent body and there seems little point in setting up such machinery and then ditching it if you don't like the findings.

The next step is for both sides to publicly accept that they got it wrong and take appropriate steps to demonstrate that they can get it right. Everyone makes mistakes but not everyone has the courage (or humility) to admit it.
(Dr) Ewan McLeish,
Marlow, Bucks

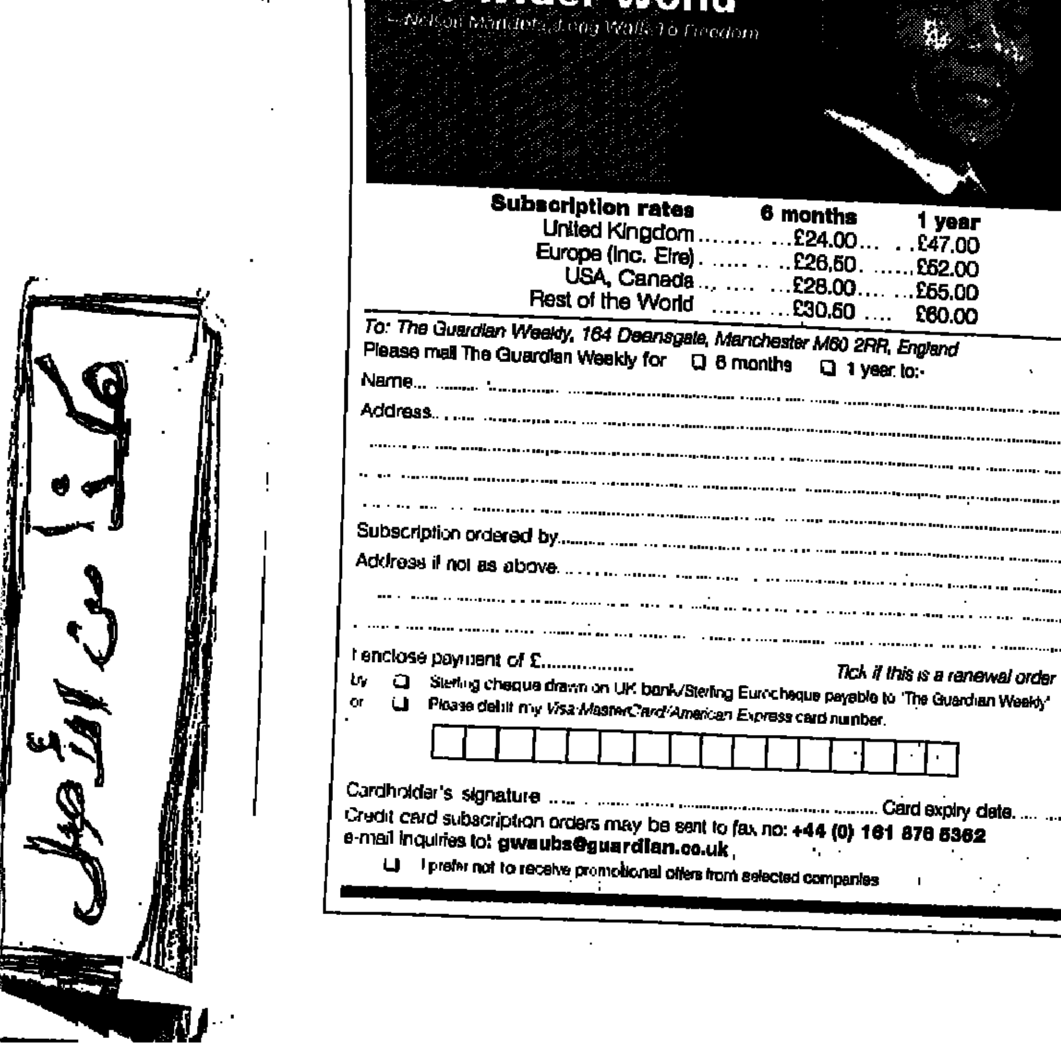
WE ARE constantly being told that the "democratic process" is the best way, the only way, to resolve conflict. That being so, why cannot the people of Ireland (the whole of Ireland) decide the future of their country? Is not the existence of Northern Ireland a denial of democracy?
D M Gough,
Southbourne, Bournemouth

CURIOUSLY, the Government has endorsed talks with others formerly considered terrorists, and even war crime suspects, in the former Yugoslavia and in Palestine: peace at any price is worth the risk, we were told. Sadly, it seems that on Ireland the British concern has been to save face and parliamentary seats rather than lives.
Felicity Arbuthnot,
London

IN THE interest of realpolitik the loyalist community must either integrate with a united Ireland, or leave. Britain gave these stark choices to sizeable British communities in Kenya and Zimbabwe, where in neither case did the threatened "rivers of blood" materialise.
Denis Hetherington,
Brighton

NO PROGRESS will be made so long as the IRA are treated as sub-human terrorists rather than freedom fighters. They see themselves as an army of liberation, and an army loses face if it gives in or hands over its weapons; it might, however, be willing to talk terms. Like Hong Kong, the province cannot remain a crown colony for ever.
Nicholas Haysom,
Winchester, Hants

OVER 50 years ago, I spent a year and a half in the remoter parts of Northern Ireland. The quote I heard then is just as apt today: "Anyone who has a solution to the Irish Question is not in possession of all the facts."
John Wightman,
Tauranga, New Zealand



The wages packet

IT SEEMS that Mr Adair Turner of CBI has realised the obvious, that an economy based on mass production cannot survive without the symbiotic capacity for mass consumption, and this means rising real wages (The Week in Britain, February 4). However, having reduced organised labour to rubble as a consequence of breaking the wage price spiral, how does Mr Turner envisage the implementation of this policy of increasing real wages? In a competitive business environment, which companies can afford to unilaterally add to their cost base in the interest of the economy's greater good?

However, there is an exception to the trend of declining real wages. Perhaps Mr Turner believes that soaring compensation packages for company directors will overtake the declines of other groups of wage earners.
Robert Michael Dummer,
Ostrava Pustkovec, Czech Republic

FOR THE past few months or so, Will Hutton has been bracketing an unconventional concept with the welcome salvoes of his insightful economic comment. But now, at last, the words have actually been written (though not by Will) that are central to our current economic dilemma: "Employers have a self-interest in ensuring that real wages rise over time because it creates extra purchasing power to buy their products". You would think so, wouldn't you?

Broadly speaking, the economic petrol tank has two compartments: the consumer and government. Efforts at debt and deficit reduction, coupled with shrinking tax revenues, are significantly eroding government purchasing power and thus government's ability (or willingness) to contribute to the fuelling of the economic engine. Consumer purchasing power and thus consumer contribution to fuelling the economic engine continues to spiral downward as a result of the often mindless application of monetarist theory in the name of corporate efficiency and industrial competitiveness.

We have seen, in the past decade, the inexorable rise of intractable unemployment, real wage decline and an era of job insecurity familiar only to that ageing and shrinking sector of the population which remembers the Great Depression.

As long as assumptions are accepted and policies are in place that limit consumer purchasing power, it's futile to whinge on about the faltering economic recovery. If there were a whisper of originality and insight residing in the corporate brain, industry would be hammering on government's door to legislate a healthy minimum wage. Wouldn't that be a turn-up for the books?
Michael J Reynolds,
Toronto, Canada

Sorting Tony's peer group

SOME hereditary peers argue that although they are not against losing their right to sit in the House of Lords, they would vote against a Labour government's bill to implement this because they do not approve of the system that might replace them (Hereditary peers "to lose Lords vote", February 18). By what convoluted logic would they vote to oppose the wishes of an elected government when they believe that they should not be in a position to do so in the first place?
D H Kedge,
Nr Reading, Berks

HEREDITARY peers are, according to Tony Blair, the "least defensible part of the British constitution". Not so; if a hereditary peerage cannot be defended, then a hereditary head of state is even less defensible.
David Morrison,
Belfast

NOTHING has been said about the embarrassing presence of the bench of bishops in the House of Lords. This group are a nominated minority of a minority of the people of Britain, yet they are entitled by law to a voice and votes in the upper house. If Tony Blair is really intent on cleaning up our parliamentary system he will have to throw these relics of a bygone age out with all the other backwoodsmen.
Terry Mullins,
National Secular Society,
London

Volunteers with a view

I FELT that Mr Bal's description of teachers who work in developing countries as "selfless missionaries" who work for little more than a pat on the back and a story to tell their grandchildren as patronising to say the least (Job hunting in the blackboard jungle, January 28). Also, the assumption that only newly qualified and TEFL teachers would work in such places is not based on fact.

I am a volunteer teacher working under the auspices of VSO in Kenya. I have three years' teaching experience in London and North Yorkshire, one of these as head of year. Many of my colleagues in VSO are equally, if not more, qualified. We are working to help share skills with people in poorer countries than our own.

At a time when our government has decided to slash the ODA's budget and leave a huge deficit in aid overseas, it is now even more important that professionals opt to work in developing countries with organisations like VSO.

If we are to see a more equitable world, then aid work must be seen by the Western world as professionals striving for this, not as "do-gooders" looking for a pat on the back.
David Moran,
Mwingi, Kenya

Briefly

MARTIN WALKER'S comments are insightful and painfully accurate. As we Americans plough through the process of choosing candidates for the presidency, it's good to know that there's at least one observer we can count on.
Nicholas Ahlfs,
Bainbridge Island, Washington, USA

THE NAME "Eurouble" for the new European currency would show both the planned future of Europe, and the future of the currency.
Denis Bzowy,
Anzing, Germany

DEREK BROWN (Triumphant Arafat gets poll warning, January 28) seems to have omitted certain details of the Palestinian election results, particularly sex-segregated data on voter participation. Or is it possible the success of the three women candidates was due not to the "unexpectedly strong contribution of female voters", but the support of Palestinian women and men who cast their votes not according to gender but according to capability?
Deborah Chaba,
Matagalpa, Nicaragua

THE CENTRAL point of Edward Goldsmith's letter (February 11) is not clear. Does he consider the freedom to reproduce at will to be one of the "irreplaceable services provided for free by the natural functioning of normal human families"? Or is it his view that the expected 1 billion increase in the population over the next decade is one of the "ever more pressing problems of today"? One of the least helpful dogmas is that the population can increase at its current rate without adversely influencing "the natural functioning of ecological systems".
(Dr) M N Foggo,
Lower Hutt, New Zealand

NIGERIANS not convicted of any crime are kept in such inhuman conditions that even the internal-affairs minister admits something is wrong (Innocent left to rot in Nigeria's jails, February 18). It's a good job Nigeria didn't end up on Michael Howard's "white list". We will no doubt be welcoming our Nigerian brothers and sisters with open arms when they apply for asylum.
(Rev) Stephen Heap,
Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church,
London

DESPITE the headline above Martin Woollacott's article (February 11) the world has not grown to "love the Bomb". People feel confused, pathetic, ridiculous. Only journalists can take the serene overview.
Wayne Hall,
Athens, Greece

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Deadly school . . . Admiral Leighton Smith holds a sniper rifle found at a Bosnian camp where Iranians are suspected of having taught assassination skills to Bosnian secret policemen PHOTO: LAURENT REBOURS

Serb general snubs Nato

Julian Borger in Sarajevo

THE Bosnian Serbs snubbed Nato on Monday by failing to turn up for a military meeting on board a United States aircraft carrier in the Adriatic.

The non-appearance of General Zdravko Tolimir, deputy commander of the separatist Serb army, cast doubt on whether Sunday's Balkan summit in Rome had succeeded in patching the cracks in the peace process.

Later, Nato announced that its commander of ground forces in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, had accepted Gen Tolimir's invitation to meet him at the Bosnian Serb headquarters in Pale on Tuesday.

Monday's meeting of the joint military commission was the first test of the Rome summit, at which Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian leaders promised to stick to last year's peace deal.

But a Nato aircraft waited much of the day in vain at Sarajevo airport to fly Gen Tolimir to the USS George Washington for a meeting with Bosnian and Croatian commanders and officers of the Nato-led implementation force (I-For), on the implementation of the troubled peace accord.

The meeting, attended by Sir Michael and the Nato commander for Bosnia, Admiral Leighton Smith, went ahead without him.

In Rome the Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, won a promise that the US would agree to the suspension of United Nations sanctions against Serbia, contingent on the Bosnian Serbs' behaviour.

The Bosnian Serbs cut off high-level contacts with Nato earlier this month after the arrest and extradition to The Hague war crimes tribunal of two of their officers.

President Milosevic promised that the Serbs would return to the negotiating table immediately. Gen Tolimir's non-appearance would appear to be a challenge to the Serbian leader's authority.

Nato said it had received no explanation from the Bosnian Serbs. Nato refuses to deal with Gen Tolimir's commander, General Ratko Mladic, who has been indicted for war crimes but is believed to be still in command of the army.

The other result of the Rome summit, a Muslim-Croat agreement on the partitioned city of Mostar, will be tested this week.

Bosnian Croats in Mostar violently rejected a European Union plan to reintegrate the Muslim and Croat parts of the city centre, attacking a car carrying the EU administrator, Hans Koschnick.

In Rome, Bosnia's Muslim-led government agreed that a smaller sector of Mostar than envisaged by the Koschnick plan would be run jointly, in return for the removal of all Croat checkpoints dividing the city. The settlement is to be policed by 100 Bosnian policemen and 100 policemen from Croatia, in a joint force supervised by European police monitors.

Bosnia's president, Alija Izetbegovic, hailed the agreement as a victory of reason over extremism.

But the Muslim mayor of east Mostar, Safet Orucevic, offered his resignation to Mr Izetbegovic on Monday. "My resignation is my personal attitude since I thought no changes [in the Mostar plan] should have been made," Mr Orucevic said.

Nato troops raid Bosnian 'terror camp'

NATO troops last week raided a clandestine training camp near Sarajevo where Iranians are suspected of having taught Bosnian secret policemen how to rig booby-traps and carry out assassinations, according to Nato officials, *writes Julian Borger in Sarajevo.*

Three Iranian instructors were arrested at the camp. Their presence was a violation of the Dayton peace agreement. Nato troops also captured eight Bosnians heading towards the camp. One of the Iranians was later released when he was found to have a diplomatic passport. The other two had Iranian military identity papers.

Admiral Leighton Smith, commander of the Nato-led Implementation Force (I-For) which is policing the Bosnia peace settlement, said: "No one can escape the obvious — that this is a terrorist training activity going on in this building and it has direct association with people in the government."

The 10 suspects being held were released after the Bosnian government pledged that they would be dealt with under its criminal law, a Nato statement said. It is difficult to see what charges they will face — the Bosnian government insists that the camp was a legitimate interior ministry school for intelligence agents, which was in the process of being shut down.

The training centre was in an isolated ski chalet just outside Fojnica. Nato officers showed journalists evidence that members of the Bosnian state security service were taught how to booby-trap toys and other household items. Journalists saw shampoo bottles with explosives inside, and a number of bombs made from toys with radio-controlled detonators.

In a separate raid, French Nato soldiers surrounded two suspected Serb snipers in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, and Serb police took them away for questioning.

China faces a severe grain crisis

John Gittings

BEIJING is becoming seriously alarmed by the prospect of severe grain shortages which could lead to food riots in urban areas, says a leading expert on the environment.

The need for huge grain imports will also complicate China's relations with the United States.

On the eve of the Chinese New Year festival, the state planning commission warned that rising food prices will provoke "a strong reaction from the masses". Provincial governors are being asked to take personal responsibility for efforts to boost grain production.

Food shortages will be "politically destabilising when people feel trapped by rising prices", argues Lester Brown, president of the US-based Worldwatch Institute.

Mr Brown says that China's need for grain imports will increase its dependence upon the US — which dominates the world market — in spite of disagreements over Taiwan or trade. This is causing real concern to the Chinese leadership.

US department of agriculture figures show that maize prices in China are already higher than average world levels, further increasing the demand for imports.

China previously rejected Mr Brown's argument that the economic boom is driving up food consumption but also reducing the area of land for cultivation. Consumption of meat, the production of which requires large inputs of grain, has increased fivefold in 16 years.

Meanwhile, China's grain area has dropped by more than 5 per cent in four years, while population has grown by nearly the same amount.

Grain production is now levelling off in China well below population growth. It is also hindered by water shortages. Critics say China should seek to impose tight control on water use, and tax the conversion of crop land.

Kohl calms Yeltsin's ire

Ian Traynor in Bonn

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl of Germany retreated on Monday from Nato's expansion into former communist central Europe, going some way to appease fierce Russian objections to the proposed enlargement.

After several hours of talks in Moscow with President Boris Yeltsin, Mr Kohl ruled out any policy that would imperil relations between Bonn and Moscow, aware that Russia's biggest bone of contention with the West is the scheme for Nato to admit former Warsaw Pact members such as Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Eager to demonstrate his support for Mr Yeltsin in the run-up to the Russian presidential election in June, Mr Kohl went to Moscow within days of the Russian leader announcing he would stand.

"I will not carry out any policy that could put the new, friendly, partner-like relations between Russia and Germany under threat," Mr Kohl said.

He reiterated the standard Western line that Moscow cannot exercise a veto over countries which choose to join the alliance and said Russia could not interfere in central European decisions on military and security alignment.

But Mr Kohl's remarks emphasised the recent shift away from a rapid Nato expansion and they are certain to alarm the central Europeans, who increasingly sense a more half-hearted Western commitment to their Nato membership ambitions.

Mr Kohl is trying to keep the Nato issue out of the Russian election campaign, where it could benefit the nationalists and communists fighting Mr Yeltsin.

But earlier this month Mr Kohl also told the Americans to keep the Nato expansion issue out of the battle for the White House, remarks that may not have endeared him to many in Washington. The chancellor is also under fire at home for so emphatically showing his support for the embattled Russian leader.

The Germans spearheaded the recent lobbying for Russia's admission to the Council of Europe, despite its questionable human rights record.

Washington Post, page 13

Defector decides to return to Baghdad

Jamal Halaby in Amman

AN IRAQI general who defected vowing to topple Saddam Hussein said on Monday that the Iraqi leader had "welcomed" his request to return from exile in Jordan.

"I'll be returning to Iraq with my wife and my children, hopefully within days," Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel al-Majid said.

Gen Majid, whose defection to Jordan last August was a serious blow to President Saddam's regime, said he had been "in touch with the Iraqi leadership through middlemen".

The general, President Saddam's son-in-law and a key figure in secret Iraqi weapons programmes, said he had recently written to the president asking to be allowed to return.

He said he did not place any conditions on his return and declined to say if President Saddam had forgiven him for his defection, which severely embarrassed the Iraqi leader.

Gen Majid's change of mind followed his rejection by Iraqi opposition groups. They consider that, as a key member of President Saddam's hierarchy for many years, he has too much blood on his hands to be acceptable.

He said his wife Raghad — President Saddam's eldest daughter and once his favourite — and their children would return with him.

Their return will boost the Iraqi leader's reputation and could help his regime as it negotiates with the UN for limited oil sales to buy food and medicine.

The general fled to Jordan with his brother, Colonel Saddam Kamel, deputy head of President Saddam's bodyguard, and their wives. Col Kamel is married to another of President Saddam's daughters.

One of Gen Majid's aides said Col Kamel and other relatives had deserted him since learning he was seeking to return to Iraq. He had had a nervous breakdown because of the pressures and growing isolation.

The defectors were granted asylum in Jordan and embraced by King Hussein to cap his efforts to distance himself from his former Iraqi ally.

Gen Majid's apparent repentance may not be too much of a setback for King Hussein. He seems to have been keeping the Iraqi defector at arm's length lately.

The general fell out with King Hussein in November over the king's suggestion for a federation of Kurds, Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in a post-Saddam Iraq. Gen Majid insisted that it would accelerate the dismemberment of Iraq.

Two weeks of oil-for-food talks between Iraqi and United Nations negotiators ended on Monday with the chief UN negotiator Hans Corell saying he was not prepared to recommend allowing Iraq to resume oil exports.

An agreement could not be reached because Iraq continued to demand the transfer to a UN-administered account of $4 billion in foreign assets frozen after it invaded Kuwait in 1990, sources said. Mr Corell said the talks were complicated by technical issues. —*AP*

In Brief

MUSLIM militants are suspected of having planted two car bombs in the Algerian capital, Algiers, which killed 12 people and wounded 32. And they have told Algeria's oil and gas workers to stop work or they will send hit squads to murder them, singling out the country's main export-earner for the first time.

NEARLY 60 people were killed and many more injured by an ammunition dump blast in the presidential palace in Kabul.

ISRAEL has approved the return of 154 members of the Palestine National Council to Palestinian-ruled areas, including Layla Khaled, who was arrested in London in 1970 for hijacking an Israeli El Al airplane.

THE FRENCH army is to be almost halved under a plan put forward by President Chirac. His military planners have recommended scrapping the main French input to the Eurocorps and sharply reducing the military presence in Africa.

THE Russian commander in Chechenia, General Tikhomirov, was quoted as saying that his forces had killed up to 170 Chechens in the battle for the village of Novogroznensky and lost 30 of their own troops.

PROSPECTS for speedy progress on signing a nuclear test ban treaty suffered a serious blow when India insisted at talks in Geneva that it would stand by its demand for parallel talks on disarmament by the five nuclear powers.

IN a move to restrict import of TV programmes made in the US, the European Parliament voted to impose advertising restrictions on television and quotas on shows produced outside the European Union.

THE PRETORIA supreme court ordered a predominantly Afrikaans school to allow black pupils into classes in South Africa's first legal test of the principle of non-racialism embodied in the constitution.

AUSTRALIA'S conservative opposition unveiled $A1 billion ($775 million) worth of tax breaks to woo the family vote before the election on March 2.

A STAGGERING 39 per cent of black Californian men in their 20s were in prison, held on remand or on probation last year, according to a new study. The rate for young Latino males was 1 in 10 and for whites 1 in 20.

MARTIN BALSAM, who appeared in nearly 50 films, including Twelve Angry Men, Psycho and Catch-22, has died, aged 76. Balsam won an Oscar as Best Supporting Actor in A Thousand Clowns.

Nigeria puts Christians on trial

Chris McGreal in Bauchi

SIXTY Nigerians accused of inciting a religious war in which many of them lost their wives and children are facing a mass trial and condemnation by a special tribunal modelled on the kangaroo court that sent the Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa to the hangman.

Military prosecutors accuse the 60 members of the minority Sayawa Christian community in Nigeria's overwhelmingly Muslim Bauchi state of provoking religious clashes in which hundreds died last July.

But defence lawyers this week will ask the high court to dismiss the charges as religious persecution. They say that while Christians accounted for most of the victims, they are the only ones facing the gallows.

The seeds of the Bauchi killings lie in Nigeria's long history of religious friction and a campaign by the Sayawa community to break free from the Hausa-Fulani Islamic administration.

In 1993, after earlier fighting, the central government promised the Sayawas their own chiefs, but Bauchi state officials blocked the plan. Prominent among them was Ibrahim Musa, a Muslim who wrote a memo describing the Sayawa as a "conquered people".

Last year when Mr Musa was appointed a Bauchi minister he decided to celebrate with what the Sayawa believe was a deliberate provocation. He ordered them to organise a congratulatory reception for him and neighbouring Muslim communities, and to pay for it.

The day before the planned reception, Sayawa elders met and told the authorities that Mr Musa was not welcome. The following morning angry Sayawas blocked roads, keeping out thousands of Muslims arriving for the ceremony, and Mr Musa had to call it off.

Witnesses say the fighting began with stone throwing. A week later hundreds of people had been hacked, shot and burnt to death. Thirty-eight villages were destroyed, about 1,500 homes wrecked and churches and mosques burnt.

The Sayawa community says it knows of at least 146 Christians killed, although more are missing. The dead include 17 children hacked to pieces in school, and 36 people murdered in a church.

No figure has been given for Muslim deaths but the state said all but seven of the villages destroyed were Christian, which suggests they account for most of the victims. Yet state officials are portraying the Sayawas as the sole villains.

Five days after the killings, Bauchi's military governor, Commander Rasheed Raji, rewrote and backdated a law to set up a semi-military tribunal with sweeping jurisdiction. The law was made to cover the previous week's killings.

The charges — as in the Saro-Wiwa case — amount to guilt by association.

Italy heads for early elections

John Hooper in Rome

ITALY is heading for a general election at the end of April after the leader of the right, the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, last week made the latest in a series of reversals and announced his conversion to the cause of an early poll.

Most of his allies and the leader of the biggest party on the left had already come out in favour of a return to the ballot box, almost three years ahead of schedule.

The man chosen by the president, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, to form a government out of the existing, evenly divided legislature had earlier admitted failure. Antonio Maccanico, a distinguished former civil servant, put the blame on the right, and particularly the leader of Italy's former neo-fascists, Gianfranco Fini.

Mr Maccanico said: "A great and extraordinary opportunity for the future of the country has been lost." He had been asked to put together a broadly-based administration that would have enabled parliament to reform the constitution.

A spring election could help clarify the balance of forces — but would be bad news for Italy's European partners. Rome currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency. With a caretaker administration in office until late April, Italy would be unable to provide the vigorous leadership the EU badly needs in the approach to next month's launch of the Maastricht review process. There is also the prospect of a lengthy delay before a cabinet is formed following the election.

Mr Maccanico's bitter words sent the stock market tumbling last week. The Milan bourse's Mibtel index lost 3.62 per cent, and the lira took a battering.

The urbane Mr Fini emerged the clear winner from the latest round of infighting and looks increasingly like the true helmsman of Italy's rightwing alliance. Convinced that his "post-fascists" will do well out of polls, he had been openly in favour of an election from the outset. But Mr Berlusconi — who has endured a string of political setbacks and is now on trial for bribery — was only gradually convinced.

Last week, however, Mr Berlusconi issued a statement saying: "Only parliamentary elections can remake the torn fabric of our democracy and give the country stable government."

In a newspaper interview last week he acknowledged that his ally had "got it right". Mr Berlusconi's own, half-hearted, attempts to reach a cross-party deal have done nothing to enhance his reputation or electoral prospects.

Demonstrators in Madrid march in silence against violence and terrorism PHOTOGRAPH: SERGIO PEREZ

Spain shocked at killing by separatists

Adela Gooch in Madrid

MORE THAN half a million people marched in silence through the streets of central Madrid on Monday to protest against a campaign of violence by Basque separatists. The prime minister, Felipe González, carried a banner with opposition politicians.

A former president of Spain's constitutional court and champion of democratic rights, Francisco Tomás y Valiente, was shot dead last week by a suspected member of the Basque separatist group ETA in his office at Madrid university.

Tomás y Valiente, aged 63, professor of legal history, was on the telephone when his assassin — identified by onlookers as a well known member of ETA's Madrid unit — burst in, shot him three times in the head and then fled, threatening students with his gun. "Everything points to ETA, the type of cartridges and the way it was done," an interior ministry official said.

The attack, which paralysed the official launch of Spain's election campaign, comes a week after a prominent Socialist politician, Fernando Múgica, was shot dead in the Basque city of San Sebastián.

Both men were close to the prime minister, Felipe González.

Many institutions declared official mourning for a man who had worked in harmony with the Socialist Party, yet who maintained his independence and was widely respected.

"He was a symbol of our democracy and this attack can only be seen as an assault on our constitution," said Diego López Garrido, an MP for the United Left and a friend.

The prime minister expressed "rage and anger", asking Spaniards "to remain calm so that we can defeat this band of lunatics".

The interior ministry claimed the attack had been carried out by Jon Bienzobar Arreche. If so, it was an act of particular bravado because his photo has been on wanted posters that recently went on display around the country.

Britain tries to halt US sanctions bill

Ian Black

BRITAIN is waging a desperate diplomatic campaign to persuade the United States Congress to drop plans for sanctions against foreign companies trading with Libya and Iran, for fear of a full-blown transatlantic row if the legislation goes ahead, the Guardian has learned.

Foreign Office officials warn that the proposed law will lead to a rift between the US and the European Union, with Britain squeezed between the two, and undermine existing United Nations sanctions against Libya. "This is a disaster in the making," one official said.

"We are very worried by the damage it could do to our bilateral relationship," a US diplomat said. "The dynamics are pushing towards a collision."

The US legislation aims to punish Iran for allegedly supporting terrorism and developing nuclear weapons, and to pressure Libya into handing over two intelligence officers accused of the Lockerbie bombing in 1988.

It is expected to be passed within weeks unless British lobbying, orchestrated from the highest levels of the Foreign Office, is successful. Prospects are said to be poor.

Direct talks between John Major and President Bill Clinton, and between the British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, and the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, have so far failed to resolve the issue.

The Iranian bill, introduced last year by Republican Senator Alphonse D'Amato of New York, would penalise non-US companies trading with Iran by denying them loans. It could prohibit their imports to the US and exclude them from US government contracts.

Rivalry and corruption cripple the economy

Last week's flawed election is just the latest blow against the people, writes **Suzanne Goldenberg**

ALTHOUGH IT still ranks among the dozen poorest countries in the world, Bangladesh has been rising out of poverty, consigning Henry Kissinger's "international basket case" to history.

Its reputation nowadays owes more to the success of non-governmental ventures like the Grameen bank, which keeps its 2 million mainly female borrowers out of the grip of rapacious village money-lenders, and has spawned copy-cat projects by the World Bank and other institutions. The official story, by contrast, has been one of repression and misrule.

Bangladesh will be 25 years old in December. Thousands of people died in the uprising against Pakistan; they left their children a country in which military dictators have ruled for 15 years.

During the 1980s, General Hussain Mohammed Ershad presided over a particularly corrupt and incompetent administration. Rich factory owners siphoned off 42 per cent of the country's power supply, and much the same happened to the other essential services.

But the introduction of economic reforms after the restoration of democracy in 1991 led to modest improvements. The relatively new garment industry became the country's largest foreign exchange earner. Economic growth rose to 6.5 per cent — close to the rates that propelled Taiwan and South Korea forward — and inflation fell to record lows. Foreign exchange reserves grew tenfold from 1991, while the savings rate, a crucial indicator of economic success, doubled to 12 per cent of GDP. And while foreign investment didn't exactly pour in, there were definite signs of interest.

"The broad picture was that in spite of it all, there have been some signs of positive trends," said Wahiduddin Mahmud, president of the Bangladesh Economic Association.

But the good times still passed tens of millions of people by. Purbo Hajipura is a Dhaka slum whose misery is defined by the fact that its people do not even live on dry land, but in corrugated tin huts perched on stilts above a swamp. The people here lack the skills or education to profit from economic liberalisation, and they have been overlooked by social workers.

"We have never seen any development or any change in our lives," said Habibur Rahman, a vegetable vendor, who came to the city because he could not survive in his village. Here he shares a tin shack, an oven in the summer heat, with one other family. "To me, development means the price of rice. And no matter who the Rajah or Rani is, the price of rice goes up."

A cycle rickshaw driver from the same district chimes in. "We are poor people, and we don't know what is in store for our children either."

That has certainly been true in recent months as the political confrontation between the government of Begum Khaleda Zia and the opposition Awami League leader, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, escalated into protest strikes and random violence.

Economists believe the unrest of the last two years has scythed the country's growth rate back to 4 per cent. Foreign aid donors cut their contributions from $2 billion to $1.6 billion. Agricultural production dropped so steeply that Dhaka had to start importing rice again. All that had been achieved in the early 1990s was coming undone. "The Bangladesh economy is coming to a crisis," Professor Mahmud said.

There are few signs that the government will heed the warnings. Although Mrs Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has romped home with 205 out of the 207 seats declared in last week's general election, it was not what could normally be considered a victory.

Sheikh Hasina's Awami League and the other main opposition parties boycotted the polls in a protest against Mrs Zia's failure to make way for a neutral, caretaker government that would oversee the elections.

Reports of systematic ballot-stuffing at what was essentially a one-party poll last week support their contention that Mrs Zia's government was incapable of conducting a fair vote.

Though it is difficult to be certain just how low the turnout was because of BNP fraud, the opposition is claiming 95 per cent of voters stayed away. Foreign monitors have put the figure at about 80 per cent. But Mrs Zia said: "If it is a democratic vote then a 10 per cent turnout has to be accepted."

Her determination to continue in office, tempered by an eve of poll offer to resume talks with a view to holding fresh elections, is matched by Sheikh Hasina, who is possessed by the idea of forcing her out. The consequences of their personal feud are ruinous. One Western diplomat says the crisis "has weakened whatever competence there was in government to take on reforms".

More important are the questions it raises about whether Bangladesh can establish a stable democracy. Human rights activists fear the elections gave an opportunity to the army, chastened after Gen Ershad's fall and confined to barracks, to play a larger role in public life. Lawyers say soldiers searching for illegal weapons in the village of Char Syedpur last month smashed up homes, and beat up 200 people. It is the first rights case to be filed against the armed forces since the restoration of civilian rule.

There are also fears that the relics of Gen Ershad's supporters in the Jatiya Party, as well as the fundamentalist Jamat-e-Islami, who also boycotted last week's vote, may ultimately gain from the crisis.

"What this whole crisis has brought out is a kind of intolerance, hostility and terror that will be difficult to control," said Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, a columnist and English professor at Dhaka University. "People are losing faith in mainstream politics."

Republicans cut down by friendly fire



The US this week

Martin Walker

EVEN before the first primary state of New Hampshire casts its bell-wether vote, it is safe to say that the real winner this year will be Bill Clinton. Vicious internal battles have left the Republicans broke, exhausted, and bitterly divided.

After Clinton, it is the Christian Coalition, which has imposed its authority upon the hapless Republicans, that will emerge with any advantage from this poll, along with Pat Buchanan who has forced the rest of the party to enlist under the banner of "religious war for the soul of America", a banner he first raised at the 1992 Republican convention in Houston.

More than six inches of snow had already fallen on New Hampshire, and it was still snowing last Friday as the once-moderate Republican candidate Lamar Alexander turned up to share the platform at his first rally with the Christian Coalition.

"If all Americans shared the Christian Coalition's involvement in politics, this country would not be in the trouble it is," he told them. "I'm glad to have the energy of Christian conservatives."

Then Elizabeth Dole turned up unexpectedly, to stand in for her husband and applaud politely in the driving blizzard as the voice of the Christian Coalition's director, Ralph Reed, proclaimed that "the Republican party cannot, should not, must not retreat from its pro-life stand".

The appearance of Alexander and Mrs Dole to pay fealty to the zealots of the religious right is just one more sign of the transformation that has overcome the old Republican party. Even Ronald Reagan kept these folk at arm's length, addressing their rallies only by telephone, even when they were gathered at the White House fence.

Senator Bob Dole and Lamar Alexander are of that centrist strand of the party which wishes the abortion issue would go away, and stop dividing the party and driving away educated and middle-class women such as Mrs Dole or Honey Alexander. Indeed, the latter used to raise funds for abortion clinics as a leading member of Planned Parenthood.

Alexander says he opposes abortion, but does not want to outlaw it nor make doctors liable to murder charges, and would leave any legislation to individual states. Dole would like to pick as his vice-presidential candidate either retired general Colin Powell or the governor of New Jersey, Christine Todd Whitman. But since both support a woman's right to choose, he dare not. The Christian Coalition has already promised to veto any such ticket.

"Let us not mince our words, my friends, as this party and this country have tragically done for too long," says Buchanan. "Abortion is murder. Whether the pregnancy is the result of incest or rape, the abortion of that innocent life is still murder. If there is killing to be done, kill the rapist."

Exactly one week earlier, on the eve of the Iowa caucuses, there was another ominous example of the tightening grip of the religious right, when all the Republican candidates paid homage to the gay-bashing lobby in their party. Dole and Alexander sent letters of endorsement to this rally, which pledged that the Republican candidate would never legalise same-sex marriages.

Buchanan and Steve Forbes and the rest of the candidates turned up at the First Federated Church in Des Moines, to hear the deep baying sound of triumphant bigotry as the Republicans were told to "send this evil life-style back to Satan, where it came from".

Only one Republican candidate refused to pay lip-service to this nastiness, Senator Richard Lugar. An impressive former chairman of the foreign relations committee, a Rhodes scholar, and nearly picked by both Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan as vice-president, Lugar is a Republican of the old school. Tolerant, internationalist, fiscally conservative and socially prepared to let other citizens mind their own moral business, he would, in times of normality, have been a leading candidate.

But what is happening inside the Republican party is not normal. If the Republican party were a person, rather than one of the most powerful and enduring political organisations, we would have called in the men in white coats by now. Last month, they were poised to anoint the political virgin Forbes, a goofy half-billionaire with an ego the size of his bank balance. This month, it is the American ayatollah Buchanan, a fundamentalist Christian.

To save them from this fate, the party now depends on an old-timer with a mean streak, or his younger alternative, an ethically-challenged and genial blancmange who plays a nice piano. There is snarling Dole, who first entered Congress 12 months before John Kennedy went to the White House, and would be the oldest man ever elected president. The ultimate Washington insider during a period when the voters appear to be clamouring for outsiders, even his considerable war chest could not maintain his front-runner's lead.



And there is the bland and deliberately inoffensive Alexander, whose skill at turning a $1 investment into $620,000 while governor of Tennessee makes Hillary Clinton look like a model of financial virtue. Lamar's wife, Honey, made almost as much again through buying stock in a private prison corporation, just as her husband's state government began contracting out prison services.

The Republican party now controls the US Senate and the House of Representatives and nearly two-thirds of the governorships of the 50 states. Facing a wounded President Clinton in an election year when the economy is slowing sharply, the Republicans should be preparing to regain the White House. They have a historic opportunity to consolidate the one grand political strategy on which the party agrees: to roll back the state from the swollen and grandiose proportions the federal government achieved after 50 years of cold war and 30 years of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

Instead, the Republicans are stuck with a field of candidates who range from the drab to the weird and terrifying, and not one of them comes within 14 points of Clinton in the latest opinion polls. They are locked in a vicious civil war, in a campaign marked by the most negative advertising in memory. But there is a logic to this process. All political parties are coalitions, held together by ideology and tradition and by a shared lust for power. Each of the four main Republican candidates represents at least one important component of that coalition.

Dole's backers say this second world war veteran from the farm state of Kansas represents the party's Mid-Western tradition, the small businessmen of countless main streets and the sturdily independent farmers. True, but he also represents corporate agriculture, like his most reliable source of campaign finance, Archer Daniels Midland, whose ads boast of being "supermarket to the world".

ALEXANDER represents the old George Bush wing of the party, the Republicans of the country clubs, a well-educated and comfortable upper middle class that prides itself on being pragmatic rather than ideological. Fiscally conservative, they tend to be socially quite liberal, on abortion and gays and prayer in schools, and all the other other issues which inflame the Christian Coalition.

Forbes represents Wall Street, and the impassioned free-marketeers and supply-side economists who last had the world's biggest economy to play with in Ronald Reagan's first term.

Those three represent the grand traditions of the Republican party. They stand for US business, the nation's global role and military alliances, and for free trade. Or at least they did, until Dole saw the political opportunity in bashing the United Nations and criticising Nafta, the free-trade pact with Mexico.

By contrast, Buchanan represents some of the old Republican traditions, from 19th century protectionism to 1930s' isolationism. But he also embodies the new forces within the party. The darling of the religious right and the anti-abortion militants, he also threatens to evict the UN from US soil, and would take the US out of Nafta and the Gatt system's World Trade Organisation. He shrugs off the labels "isolationist" and "protectionist", and says simply, "I am for America First — and the moment I lift my hand from the Bible at my swearing in, every US soldier in Bosnia boards a plane to come home".

Buchanan believes he represents the Republican future, and in private conversation over a glass of chardonnay he calls it "the culmination of a long, historic process".

"I'm not a country club Republican. They don't like folks like us in that country club," he told a rally of working-class Christians and gun-owners in Littleton, New Hampshire, last week. "When it comes to a choice between Wall Street profits or the share dividends they like to count down at the country club, and the jobs of ordinary Americans who are trying to compete with Mexicans who earn a dollar a day, I'm with the ordinary Americans."

The Republicans are the party of Abraham Lincoln, who fought the civil war to end slavery. As a result, the South was for a century the strongest base of the Democratic party, until President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights bill into law in 1964, and whispered to his aide Bill Moyers: "This will keep us out of power for a generation."

That year, the Republican candidate Barry Goldwater won four Southern states. In 1968, the defecting governor of Alabama, George Wallace, peeled away a few more, and by Nixon's re-election campaign of 1972 the South was becoming the keystone of the new Republican majority in presidential elections. By 1994, the Democrats' rout in the South was complete in both the congressional and state elections.

The future of the Republican party is now a matter of numbers. In a low turn-out, like Louisiana or Iowa this year, the dedication of the Buchanan brigades makes him do disproportionately well. Buchanan is convinced he can win New Hampshire, and is certain to keep going to the Super Tuesday primary when the South votes on March 12. But Wall Street and main street, and country club, are deeply suspicious of his populism, so Buchanan remains a long shot. (If Buchanan got the nomination, and targeted that large mass of Democratic voters opposed to Nafta from the beginning, Clinton would face an interesting race.)

The Republicans seem condemned by personal rivalry to lose their chance. Either Dole or Alexander could beat Buchanan in the primaries and give Clinton a serious race.

Neither one will back down, and though Alexander has the advantage of age, Dole has the money. But they both look second best, and so they are, ever since Colin Powell and Speaker Newt Gingrich separately decided not to run.

"Even if I lose this nomination, I have been trying to make this a Buchananite party, and I am winning," Buchanan said last week. Quite so. Dole is campaigning as a cultural conservative, and Alexander looked suitably devout as he bent the knee at his first Christian Coalition rally last week.

Jim Hoagland, page 13

Oregon couple separated by political rivalry

Jonathan Freedland
In Concord, New Hampshire

WHILE most Americans are watching the Republican family feud in New Hampshire, the voters of Oregon are gripped by a domestic war much closer to home: the bitter contest between a husband and wife fighting each other for the same seat.

Thomas and Melinda Wilde are both candidates for the 8th district of the Oregon state senate. He is a Democrat, she a Republican, and the battle has already turned nasty.

From the house they share the political rivals devise attacks on each other and campaign literature to expose the flaws they know only too well.

"She knew nothing about politics before she met me and, frankly, I'm the better candidate," says Mr Wilde. What's more, he adds, she doesn't do her share of the washing-up.

The duelling couple — the first to stage such a contest in a US election — used to be on the same side. Until last month, he was her campaign manager. But they bickered about everything.

"It got way too personal," Mr Wilde says. So Mr Wilde, a house-husband aged 40, considered divorce. Eventually, he chose the next best thing: a public battle at the polls.

"I was ticked off to lose my campaign manager," says Ms Wilde, a lawyer aged 35. "But my biggest concern was that he would take away my credibility, that people would think this is a joke." Instead, voters have embraced the contest, marvelling at the rival his-and-hers campaign signs on the Wilde's front lawn, and licking their lips at the dirty tricks in store.

The pair insist they want to stay together. Do they still love each other? "Yeah, sure," Mr Wilde says. "But I didn't get into this to lose."

Howard to end jail for fine defaulters

Alan Travis

THE jailing of more than 22,000 fine defaulters a year is to end, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, announced last week.

New guidance is to be issued to magistrates which will end the centuries-old practice of sending to prison petty offenders who have failed repeatedly to pay court fines.

"Together with the Lord Chancellor, I am reviewing the powers and procedures available to the courts to ensure that they can enforce payment of fines without resorting to imprisonment save in the most exceptional circumstances," Mr Howard told a prison service conference in Brighton last week.

The decision coincides with a sharply rising prison population — expected to hit a record 53,000 by the end of this month at a time of a 13.3 per cent cut in running costs.

There is also increasing public concern over the jailing of petty offenders — particularly women with multiple debt problems who have not paid television licences — and poll tax defaulters.

The latest published figures show that 22,500 fine defaulters were jailed in 1994 — making up more than a quarter of those sent to prison that year. Most were in prison for less than a week. Forty per cent of the men involved were jailed for failing to pay motoring fines. Nearly a fifth of the 1,450 women jailed were imprisoned for failing to have a television licence.

The Home Secretary also confirmed that he is to introduce a white paper later this year which will introduce minimum sentences for repeat burglars and drug dealers and "two strikes and you're out" mandatory life sentences for repeat rapists. This package could add 10,000 to 20,000 inmates to the annual prison population.

Mr Howard refused to outline what other options he will use to ensure that fines remain a credible court sentence. Among options canvassed are greater use of community service orders; money payment supervision orders under which probation officers help defaulters sort out debts; and electronic tagging.

The decision to end the use of jail was widely welcomed by penal reformers and within the prison service. Paul Cavadino of the Penal Affairs Consortium said jailing people whose original offences were insufficiently serious to deserve custody was indefensible.

But magistrates and chief probation officers later voiced strong reservations over Mr Howard's decision. Rosemary Thomson, chairwoman of the Magistrates' Association, warned it would remove an effective deterrent against those who wilfully refused to pay. Some magistrates argue that many pay up "at the prison gate" when faced with the immediate threat of jail.

Mrs Thomson said it was a myth that most of those who were jailed were pathetic hardship cases of women with multiple debt problems. Only 400 of the 22,500 jailed in 1994 for failing to pay a court fine were women who had originally failed to buy a television licence.

"Some people wilfully refuse to pay their fine and it is hard to think there's any option for them but prison," Mrs Thomson said.

● One hundred extra accountants are being recruited by the Prison Service to prevent a repeat of the "complete breakdown in monitoring and control" which led to a £37 million spending spree last year.

Mackay heeds divorce plea

SPOUSES being divorced against their will under new no-fault divorce laws will have the right to ask the court to block the divorce because it would cause them or their children substantial financial or other hardships, *writes Clare Dyer.*

The amendment to the Family Law Bill has been conceded by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay, after pressure from Tory peers who believe the no-fault law will make divorce too easy and harm children.

The Lord Chancellor's department denied that children will be given the right to contest their parents' divorce.

The change is likely to prove largely cosmetic, because a similar provision in the existing law is rarely invoked successfully. Spouses divorced without their consent after five years' separation can contest the divorce on the ground that it will cause them (but not their children) grave financial or other hardship.

The Family Law Bill would have afforded the same protection to any spouse divorced under the no-fault law, but Lord Mackay has now agreed to amend "grave" to "substantial" and include hardship to the children.

Few spouses succeed in blocking a divorce on hardship grounds because it is the formal dissolution of the marriage which must be shown to cause the hardship, rather than the splitting of the family.

The few cases in which courts have barred divorces on hardship grounds under existing law have mainly been where women would lose benefits or pension rights by being divorced rather than separated. Lord Mackay has decided not to go ahead with a provision allowing courts to give former wives a share of their former husbands' pensions on divorce. Lord Mackay wants to consult further on the issue "in the absence of evidence that the provisions are necessary and will work".

In Brief

THE OVERSEAS development minister, Baroness Chalker, announced that future British aid will be targeted at only 20 countries. The aid budget was cut by 5 per cent last year.

Comment, page 12

THE "HUSBAND" of 13-year-old Sarah Cook was released from jail after a Turkish court heard she had the body of a 16-year-old.

AT THE 15th annual British record industry awards, Oasis won the best Album, Video and Group categories. Supergrass took the Newcomers award, Paul Weller was named best Male Singer, and David Bowie won an Outstanding Contribution award. At the same event, scores of teenage girls struggled to come to terms with the last television appearance of chart-topping British band Take That, who announced their break-up.

COMPENSATION paid to pregnant women discharged from the armed forces will exceed £55 million and the total number claiming will reach 5,150, according to documents listing every award made by the Ministry of Defence.

SAUDI dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari, who been denied asylum by Britain, is standing for election as rector of Glasgow University in an attempt to avoid deportation.

MORE THAN half the Rail, Maritime and Transport union's national executive have joined Arthur Scargill's embryonic Socialist Labour party, raising the possibility that the 68,000-strong RMT could eventually disaffiliate from Labour in protest at the direction taken by Tony Blair.

LIZ FORGAN, managing director of BBC network radio, resigned with two years of her five-year contract to run. She gave no reason, but bureaucracy and money shortages are thought to have influenced her decision.

A MAN has been arrested in connection with the murder of French student Celine Figard last December.

COMMITTAL proceedings against Szymon Serafinowicz, aged 85, accused of second world war atrocities, has begun at a Surrey magistrates court.

Major stands by those in firing line

Michael White and Richard Norton-Taylor

JOHN MAJOR threw a protective shield around the two ministers at the centre of the arms-to-Iraq controversy in the face of caustic criticism of their conduct in the long-awaited Scott report and angry Opposition calls for their dismissal.

Both the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, William Waldegrave, and Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, insisted they would not resign, and Downing Street made plain it will fight to keep them as Labour continues what Mr Major regards as its scurrilous counter-attack.

Last week's Cabinet decision to tough out the pre-election crisis came despite Mr Waldegrave being accused of a "deliberate" failure to inform Parliament about a decision to allow exports of more arms-related equipment to Iraq for fear of "strong public opposition" — particularly in the light of Saddam Hussein's gassing of Kurds.

Sir Richard Scott says in his report that there was a change of policy towards Iraq in 1988, and to argue otherwise, as Mr Waldegrave and his fellow ministers did, amounted to "sophistry".

He criticises Sir Nicholas for being "personally at fault" in his handling of the Matrix Churchill trial — the collapse of which triggered the 39-month inquiry.

But his targets go beyond the two ministers most closely involved. Sir Richard accuses the Government of "failing to discharge the obligations imposed by the constitutional principle of ministerial accountability".

Questions of Procedure for Ministers says it is their duty not to deceive or mislead Parliament. "Example after example has come to light of an apparent failure by ministers to discharge that obligation."

The Prime Minister and his Cabinet clung to Sir Richard's acceptance that there was no conspiracy to let innocent Matrix Churchill defendants go to jail and that both ministers had acted "honestly and in good faith" as the Thatcher government changed its policies to help British industry cash in on the end of the Iran-Iraq war. There was "no duplicitous intention", the report concedes.

In a combative Commons statement, Ian Lang, the Trade Secretary, promised to act on Sir Richard's calls for reforms, including greater government openness and better management of intelligence reports, while insisting that it was Labour's duty to apologise for three years of "reckless and malicious" allegations of conspiracy and cover-up.

Faced with what Tory loyalists later said was "a cock-up, not a conspiracy", Labour insisted that incompetence alone would warrant the two resignations.

Led by the shadow foreign secretary, Robin Cook, Labour and the Liberal Democrats accused ministers of blatant news management designed to duck the report's two central conclusions: that ministers did change their arms sale policy towards Saddam Hussein and that they refused to admit it either to Parliament or the courts.

In Sir Richard's words, there was "clear evidence" that ministers knew of the Iraqi supergun a year before parts of it were seized by British Customs in 1989, Mr Cook said. As for the intelligence information as to the true destiny of Matrix Churchill machine tools — Iraq — it was so strong that ministerial insistence to the contrary amounted to "the Nelsonian use of a blind eye".

Labour and the Liberal Democrats later dispatched a dossier of quotes from Sir Richard's report to every Tory MP in an attempt to persuade them of the extent of the judge's criticisms of the Government.

Mr Cook and the Liberal Democrat spokesman, Menzies Campbell, holding a rare joint press conference, urged Tory MPs to study the report and recognise that the former Foreign Office minister, Mr Waldegrave, had been found guilty of deliberately misleading Parliament more than 30 times.

Mr Campbell said: "It is not possible to think of any sphere of activity in which an individual could be so criticised and still retain his job."

Labour plans to spread the attack to Mr Major himself, arguing that by defending ministers the Prime Minister has created a parliamentary as much as a political crisis.

But Mr Major and Mr Lang are narrowly interpreting the terms of reference of the report, saying it was only examining two central charges — whether there had been any sales of arms to Iraq and whether there had been a conspiracy to send innocent people to jail.

The Opposition parties are also unhappy at the way Sir Richard has pulled his punches in the sometimes contradictory report. Labour officials, eager for a scalp, privately accuse him of "lacking bottle" as well as naivety in the way he allowed the presentation of his report to be stolen from him by ministers: the judge showed them draft copies of his report and invited their proposed amendments.



The inquiry's main points

- Government policy towards the export of "non-lethal military goods" was changed following the Iran-Iraq ceasefire in 1988 in a way that should have been reported to the Commons.
- It was a substantive change in policy, not a reinterpretation of existing advice in the light of changing circumstances, as Mr Waldegrave claimed.
- Government ministers "deliberately" failed to inform Parliament of this shift in policy because of fears of public opposition.
- None of the ministers involved in the changes acted with "duplicitous" intent in reshaping guidelines, but they agreed that no publicity should be given to the decision to relax them.
- The Government's claim that its position over arms sales to Iran and Iraq was "even-handed" had been untrue since the decision, taken as a consequence of the Salman Rushdie affair, to return to a more strict approach towards Iran.
- In the Supergun affair, MI6 and the Government had reason to suspect that pipes being produced in Britain by Walter Somers were intended for military use long before the pipes were seized by Customs in 1990, but did not act.
- The Matrix Churchill arms-to-Iraq trial "ought never to have commenced".
- The Government had no intention of sending innocent men to jail by blocking the release of crucial documents in the trial. However, the practice and use of public interest immunity certificates to block the release of government documents to the defence "had no authoritative precedent in a criminal trial", although ministers were not informed of this before being asked to sign.
- Attorney General Sir Nicholas Lyell was personally at fault for failing to brief the Matrix Churchill trial prosecutors of Michael Heseltine's reluctance to sign a PII.

Failings that continue to haunt ministers

David Pallister

SIR NICHOLAS LYELL, the Attorney General who handled the preparations for the Matrix Churchill trial was personally at fault for a serious omission in the prosecution case, Sir Richard said.

This was the failure to instruct the prosecuting counsel Alan Moses QC that Michael Heseltine, then trade and industry secretary, had reservations about signing a public interest immunity certificate (PII) designed to persuade the judge not to disclose documents to the defence.

The judge was never advised of Mr Heseltine's doubts, even though Sir Nicholas had assured Mr Heseltine that the limited scope of his PII would be drawn to the attention of the court.

Sir Richard said he accepted "the genuineness of his belief that he was personally, as opposed to constitutionally, blameless for the inadequacy of the instructions sent to Mr Moses. But I do not accept that he was not personally at fault."

In the report, William Waldegrave, the Foreign Office minister from 1988-90, is also criticised for sending 38 untrue letters to MPs between March and July 1989, and for misleading Parliament. In the letters he asserts that "the Government have not changed their policy on defence sales to Iraq or Iran."

Sir Richard said: "Mr Waldegrave knew, first hand, the facts that, in my opinion, rendered the 'no change in policy' statement untrue."

Mr Waldegrave rejected the report's criticisms in every particular. In a prepared statement he said: "Sir Richard Scott clears me of lying to Parliament or intending to mislead anyone in letters I signed."

But Sir Richard singled out a parliamentary answer to Liberal Democrat MP David Alton in February 1989 in which Mr Waldegrave said: "There has been no change in our policy on arms sales to Iran . . ." Sir Richard then notes a letter from Mr Waldegrave's private secretary on February 7 which said: "Mr Waldegrave is content for us to implement a more liberal policy on defence sales, without any public announcement on the subject."

Sir Richard concluded that the failure to tell the House of Commons about the change "was the inevitable result of the agreement between the three junior ministers [Waldegrave, Alan Clark, and Lord Trefgarne] that no publicity would be given to the decision to adopt a more liberal, or relaxed policy . . . I have come to the conclusion that the overriding and determinate reason was a fear of strong public opposition to the loosening of the restrictions on the supply of defence equipment to Iraq and a consequential fear that the pressure of the opposition might be detrimental to British trading interests."

Although Sir Richard accepted that Mr Waldegrave did not regard the agreement to change the guidelines as a change of policy, he said there was "overwhelming evidence to the contrary".

Lyell: 'personally at fault'

Waldegrave: 'fear of opposition'

Ministers heavily armed against the truth

Hugo Young reflects on a world of duplicity and unaccountable networks

THE EMBLEMATIC character in the saga of the Scott inquiry is not William Waldegrave but Geoffrey Howe. Sir Richard Scott had hardly begun his work before Lord Howe took it on himself to be the scourge and defamer of his work: prosecutor, judge and jury in the attack on what he was about to publish.

Howe's contention was partly that Scott's procedure was unfair, and his inquiry "not a tribunal upon whose judgment the reputation of anyone should be allowed to depend". This perilous exaggeration did not deter the former foreign secretary from declaring that the report had vindicated ministers and government in all particulars. But it wasn't, in any case, the essence of his outrage. This was, rather, the "gap of non-comprehension" existing between Scott's world and "the real world", which rendered the judge incapable of engaging with what ministers had to do.

Howe offered this scathing opinion as an elder statesman, as if he were now above the battle which Scott so woefully failed to understand. But he was nothing of the sort. Reading the report, one is reminded not only that he, as William Waldegrave's superior, presided with meticulous enthusiasm over every subterfuge by which Middle East arms sales were kept from public view, but that he exalts everything Scott criticises about Whitehall life: its secrecies, duplicities, unaccountable networks; its swift capacity to rationalise the misleading of Parliament as *raison d'état*.

The ministers involved in arms sales to Iraq have escaped any censure they're prepared to regard as such. They're satisfied that the sincerity of their errors protects them from blame. In fact, they think they're heroes. Howe told Scott that the guidelines restraining arms sales to Iraq and Iran amounted, in contrast with the policies of other countries, to "a huge national sacrifice".

For in Geoffrey Howe's world, not only do the ministers in this saga have nothing to be ashamed of, there isn't even a marginal case to answer. The national interest demands the sale of arms, lethal or non-lethal according to time and place. The rules are debated between honourable men, with conclusions that must inevitably be kept quiet: and, if exposed, must be justified by the kind of casuistry which, in Howe's world, is second nature, but which, if admitted to Scott's world, requires to be taken apart. It is, above all, the act of taking apart that Howe resents as a grotesque intrusion on the public interest.

Reading the Scott report, one can see why. It takes apart his world as never before.

Consider the single question of the guidelines. The question was: did Waldegrave knowingly deceive Parliament? Answer: No. He was not, says Scott, "duplicitous". Therefore he claims innocence. He says he sincerely didn't believe the guidelines had been changed. Yet behind this simple verdict lies a vast accumulation of evidence that they had changed, that officials and ministers thought they had changed, that ministers were aware how intensely embarrassing this might be, that "the convenience of secrecy" — a phrase Scott proffered to Sir Robin Butler, the essence of which the Cabinet Secretary did not reject — prevailed whenever necessary.

The original guidelines, first of all, were not published. Howe, who framed them in 1984, thought they "should be allowed to filter out". During the Iran-Iraq war, the restraints they were supposed to impose on lethal weaponry were even-handed but liberally interpreted — with full awareness, however, of how scandal might beckon. Of Matrix-Churchill machine tools, for example, one of Howe's officials wrote in 1988: "If it becomes public knowledge that the tools are to be used to make munitions, deliveries would have to stop at once."

That the position altered when the war ended is attested to in numerous ways. Paul Channon, trade secretary at the time, told Scott: "I think [ministers] changed the rules as they went on. In reality, if ministers decide to ignore the guidelines, they can be ignored." Alan Clark, Channon's junior, ecstatically noted the "brilliant" drafting that had exchanged a tight policy for a looser one — "so obviously drafted with the object of flexibility".

But we don't need to rely only on fringe players. In September 1988, Howe remarked that "it could look very cynical" if, shortly after condemning Iraq for using chemical warfare against Kurds, "we adopt a more flexible approach to arms sales". He wanted to encourage these. His officials should "get moving down that path". Asked by Scott to examine why secrecy about the new policy must obtain, Howe alluded with a palpable shudder to "the emotional way in which such debates are conducted in public".

This was not a foreign secretary talking about a policy that did not change. Nor, obviously, was Waldegrave when his office wrote in February 1989 that he was "content for us to implement a more liberal policy on defence sales without any public announcement".

ASKED why this flexibility itself could not have been admitted rather than concealed behind a succession of studiously misleading parliamentary answers, Waldegrave and Howe each supplied explanations that concede starkly the priorities which they, in their heroic conduct of the public business, invite us to excuse.

"Because it was judged that there were overriding reasons for giving misleading information about tilts to one side," said Waldegrave.

"If we were to lay specifically our thought processes before you," said Howe, "they are laid before a worldwide range of uncomprehending or malicious commentators."

This is the moral quality of the world of Howe, Waldegrave, Major, Lang and every other minister who sees through one lens his own innocence, and through the other the naivety of Lord Justice Scott. It is not exactly amoral; it merely gives dissembling a higher priority than other worlds. But it countenances apologias which, I submit, would be intolerable in any other field of human conduct, culminating with the decisive *aperçu*, hitherto undiscovered even by Sir Humphrey, that, whatever new guidelines were manifestly being followed, policy hadn't changed because ministers said they hadn't changed it.

In the world of Sir Richard Scott, even after three years' exposure, it proved impossible to accommodate such linguistic relativism. In giving his account, Scott is not his own best ally. The report is absurdly long. Gigantism takes over his lordship, as he journeys down every meandering and sometimes futile side-path of the arms export world, the licensing and concealment thereof, the 1939 statute that still governs it etc etc. The limitless verbosity of the High Court bench, so ready to reach for double negatives, is rotundly on display. But in most ways, the judge lives up to Howe's worst expectations. More than anyone could see in the first few hours after publication of the report, he exposes and denounces the world Howe speaks for.

It is true, for example, that he acquits Waldegrave of knowingly misleading the Commons. The minister had no "duplicitous intention". On the other hand, his conduct and that of Howe and every other minister had duplicity about it. What remained "duplicitous", he writes, was the "nature of the flexibility claimed for the guidelines". In any other context than one in which ministers were expecting to be hung, drawn and quartered, such a verdict would have been worth a resignation.

The panoply of linguistic game-playing, moreover, may satisfy the world of Howe. The armies of Whitehall have rewritten the grammar of honest accountability. But the judge is not impressed. The contention that the guidelines were not changed, he said in a paragraph that somehow escaped Lang's attention, "is so plainly inapposite as to be incapable of being sustained by serious argument".

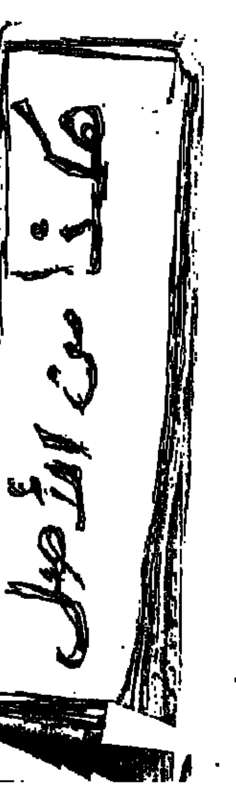
HE SAW what was up. The change was kept secret for a very old-fashioned reason, which he understands. "It might legitimately have been feared that public knowledge of an intended relaxation of restrictions on the supply of defence equipment to Iraq would provoke such indignation in the media and among vociferous sections of the British public as to be politically damaging."

What Scott won't accept is that commercial interests should override all other considerations. He calls public disclosure a "constitutional" question, which should have been weighted better in the balance against political advantage and the intricacies of Middle East trade politics, real or imagined. His verdict on the world Howe defends is extraordinarily harsh. For six years, he finds, the Government consistently undervalued the public interest in Parliament being kept informed. "Time and time again", ministers came down against full disclosure for no better reason than that this would be politically inconvenient.

Will the Scott report redefine Howe's "real world"? In one sense, the real world seems to be winning. Nobody is planning to resign. The linguistic conjurers think they've taken the big tricks.

The systemic indictment, however, stands. Ministers, clearly, intend to pay little attention. Having got the exonerations they wanted, they've made a few patronising references to Sir Richard's recommendations on export licensing. For the rest, they have no shame. Their world is Howe's world, and the only reason this opportunity arose to expose it was a misbegotten prosecution of Matrix-Churchill executives that went wrong.

The only weapon against cynical expectations is that the world of Richard Scott should capture the public mind as being ineffably superior to that of Geoffrey Howe. The ministers survive, to continue their heroic obfuscations. The judge, in his innocence, argues for something better. So should all who believe that these ministers, when put to the test, were serial defaulters against the truth.



Poor people should be targeted by aid

THE AID DEBATE that Lady Chalker rekindled last week is about principle and methods — but it is also about money. That is why a speech which sets out new aims for British aid policy, and offers many points on which the aid agencies would largely agree, still has to be held up to a searching light. There is a good case for targeting British bilateral aid more precisely rather than dispersing it among no fewer than 163 different countries. The goal set out by Lady Chalker, to ensure that "the poorest countries get the greatest concentration of effective help", is an excellent one. But the bare figures show that targeting under conditions of a declining aid budget will have little positive effect. Britain's position in the league table of aid donors is not all that brilliant — and will worsen further as a result of the cut announced in last November's budget.

The thrust of targeting as set out last week is to concentrate the resources of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) on the poorer countries of Asia and Africa. As Lady Chalker acknowledged, they already receive more than two-thirds of British bilateral aid and this proportion will only increase slightly this year. But the ODA's own calculations, published in its Fundamental Expenditure Review last year, show that aid to sub-Saharan Africa and south and east Asia is expected to fall in cash terms by 17-18 per cent by 1997-98. This is before the Chancellor's cut of 6 per cent is taken into account. Shifting resources from Latin America and elsewhere to the new target areas seems therefore likely to do little more than compensate for the reductions that are bound to occur. Many recipients will end up by noticing little difference. Self-congratulation about Britain being the world's fifth largest aid donor is also misplaced. Lady Chalker at least added the revealing phrase "in absolute terms". British aid, as the OECD's *development assistance committee* has noted, ranks joint 14th with Finland as a percentage of GNP. According to the same unit of measurement our aid will have fallen to 0.26 per cent by 1997-98. The UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP has long ago sunk far below the horizon.

This reduction in government aid budgets is not confined to Britain: OECD aid to the developing world is now at its lowest level — by the same measurement in proportion to GNP — for more than 20 years. It has become fashionable to argue that private investment has not only risen sharply but does a better job. Lady Chalker quite correctly rejects this excuse. Private financial flows tend to reward those who are already doing well, and they do not offer concessional assistance.

It is encouraging to see the "overarching purpose" of British aid clearly defined as "poverty reduction and sustainable development" before more specific aims are set out. But over-precise targeting towards specific countries is not necessarily the best way. As several leading NGOs have argued in response, it is the *people* rather than the *country* who need to be targeted. There are substantial pockets of acute need in supposedly well-off developing countries. We may still note (as the OECD has done) that the quality of British bilateral aid is often much higher than that extended multilaterally. Britain does do some things very well. The question is whether we can do so in all three essential areas of the post-cold war world — peace-keeping, emergency intervention and development aid. Britain's claim to be a significant world power is bolstered by this performance. But if aid budgets continue to decline, then "punching above our weight" will become a hollow charade.

The end of the peer show

NOTHING in British politics so sharply defines the difference between Labour and the Conservatives as their respective attitudes to the House of Lords. However radically the Conservatives may see themselves in other respects, they remain the most dogged defenders of the unreformed upper House. There is no more dramatic disjunction than to hear Conservative ministers celebrating the wholesale and wilful restructuring of British industry in one breath and displaying outrage at even the most gradual proposed reform of the British constitution in the next.

Conversely, however cautious Labour may be about uprooting the legacy of Conservative economic and industrial policy, or about chucking out Conservative restructuring of the welfare state and education, when it comes to the constitution Labour is genuinely ready for action. Earlier this month Tony Blair set out an ambitious legislative programme, coherent and directed, which would occupy a Labour government for at least the lifetime of a parliament. In this part of Labour's programme there is no shirking the big targets — with the conspicuous exception of the monarchy.

Mr Blair committed himself to abolishing the political power of hereditary peers. Party loyalty among the 300-plus hereditary peers is grossly biased in the Conservatives' favour, he argues, and there are no conceivable grounds for maintaining this system. He believes that some of the genuinely talented existing hereditary peers could return to the reformed House as life peers, and that there is room for further discussion about a continuing appointed element in the event of the upper House becoming an elected body at a later stage.

The central objection to Mr Blair's plans is not that they go too far but that they do not go far enough. The loss of the hereditary peers will leave some 280 life peers who take the various party whips, plus another 100 or so cross-benchers (who include the judges and the bishops) who take no whip. Even among those who will remain there is a built-in Conservative majority. A Blair government would have to do something to redress the balance in the short term, and will also need to establish means by which future appointments are made. Clearly, this confers enormous extra powers of patronage upon the office of prime minister. Unless and until the second House is elected in some as yet unspecified way, there will remain a permanent danger of party bias, nepotism and corruption.

Labour's shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw, has countered this objection by saying that the proposed bill to abolish hereditary voting rights will be a first step, leading to other more democratic changes. To guard against government bias there will be an independent advisory body with an unspecified role in selecting new life peers. Mr Straw's elaborations do not dispose of the fear that Labour will find the temptation to reward its own chums irresistible. Better a Labour majority than a Conservative majority, many will say. But better an elected second chamber than either of them. And soon.

Playing it blind

THE UN'S GRUDGING assent to extend its peacekeeping mission in Angola for another three months reflects a lukewarm commitment that is all too familiar. Like other countries that became surrogate battlefields of the cold war, Angola and its continuing problems have been shrugged aside. The international community failed to back the verdict of the 1992 elections, which should have confirmed the existing Angolan government (MPLA) in power. Instead it condoned the wrecking efforts of the rebel Unita, which threatened to turn the country into another Somalia — and succeeded in doing so. In the two years of ensuing conflict it is estimated that more than 300,000 Angolans — about 3 per cent of the population — died. The Angolan people now live, and die, in a situation that is neither war nor peace. Three-quarters of a million of them are displaced and a million children (let alone adults) now suffer acute deprivation.

A new Human Rights Watch report* is correct in recording that both sides have committed violations. New weaponry has reached the government in Luanda, especially from Russia and the Ukraine. Unita has stepped up its cross-border operations to bring in new weapons by land and air from Zaire and the Congo along routes developed in previous years by the CIA. A blind eye also appears to be turned towards the purchase of diamonds from Unita by reputable international traders, which has replaced US covert aid.

The root problem remains the legitimacy conferred by international actors — from the US itself to UN aid agencies and the secretary-general — upon the Unita leader Jonas Savimbi after he spurned the result of the 1992 elections. He has now slowed down even further his army's demobilisation while refusing to take up ministerial posts offered to Unita in the latest of many concessions. Angola's problems will not be solved as long as Mr Savimbi's thuggish behaviour is appeased.

*Angola Between War And Peace, Human Rights Watch, 33 Islington High Street, London N1 9LH

When it is easier to make war than peace

Martin Woollacott

LONG-RUNNING conflicts are like springs which, bent out of their normal shape by efforts at settlement, always threaten a violent resumption of their original form. That is the lesson of Ireland, and the spectre which looms over the search for peace in Bosnia, in the Middle East, in the increasingly tense north-east Asian region, and in many other places.

War is a habit all too easily resumed, and peace a habit not easily learned. What breaks the back of peace processes? It is a central question as the unravelling of what had seemed to be agreed deals threatens the era of negotiations which the end of the cold war made possible.

The short answer to what breaks the back of peace processes is conducting them as if they were a continuation of war. If there is no moderation of objectives, the mere transition to a non-violent phase will solve nothing. The evidence suggests that three factors are critical. One is the obsession with issues seized on not principally for their substantive importance but as a means of inflicting humiliation on the other side, of engineering submission and thus achieving through non-violent means what could not be achieved by violence.

Sometimes this comes out of what might be called the imperial cast of mind, the approach to negotiations of nations that have been or still are great powers, and who find it extraordinarily difficult to deal with antagonists on terms of equality. Even in making concessions they somehow find ways to affirm their primacy. Sometimes it is the challenger of such a power who raises the issue first. Soldiers know this moment well. It is the point at which the will of one side prevails over that of the other. It is the key to war but the worst of all approaches to peace.

The second factor is that once blood has been shed, once people have died for a cause, there is a kind of emotional investment in war that can often tip the balance against a peace that seems to amend or diminish that cause.

The third factor is the global atmosphere. When powerful nations are ready to devote time, effort and money to the settlement of the quarrels of other countries, they can create a situation where it is hard to resist the general tendency toward peaceful resolutions. This is what has waxed and waned over the past five years as US attention, in particular, has wavered. The US engagement, after many wobbles, in Bosnia, Ireland and the Middle East has, for the moment, restored some of the momentum.

But it is the urge to dominate that most undermines peace. The lesson of recent peacemaking is that, initially, it succeeds only when such issues are avoided, as they were in the Norwegian-mediated talks between the Israelis and the PLO. The rub comes later, when one issue or another can become pivotal in a struggle for pyschological ascendancy. In Ireland that issue is the decommissioning of arms. In the Middle East, Palestinian statehood. In Bosnia, Bosnian statehood, in particular as it affects war crimes. In the Taiwan Strait, where there is admittedly no peace process but there had been a period of quiescence which might have led in that direction, it is not the principle of one China but the question of who decides on the timing and form of reunification.

There is a blurred and dangerous line between pursuing one's interests in peace negotiations and aiming for victories that cast down the other side. There is always a tendency for war to go on by other means. The decommissioning issue in Ireland, for example, has no practical military significance. The target, rather, was IRA ideology, which maintains that they are in a state of war with the British regime and that their arms are legitimate. So what Britain sought was not an actual end to the capacity but the defeat of a concept.

The turning point for the IRA may therefore have come when the Mitchell report seemed to sustain the British line that IRA arms were illegal, rather than when John Major made his proposal for elections.

But even the concept may be of less importance than the search for a way of forcing the other side into a retreat, a search which the IRA and the British have been conducting. This urge to dominate was long ago identified in conflict theory as one of the reasons why conflicts go critical and why resolution efforts fail.

Hindsight shows that the persistent raising of the decommissioning issue was a mistake, and one which London tried to back away from too late. It can of course be argued that Sinn Fein and the IRA should have agreed to some nominal decommissioning. That would also be true, but it amounts to saying that there have been two mistakes rather than one, and that this is always likely to happen when the issue of who dominates is allowed to become central.

OLD powers with a tradition of thinking of themselves as the centre of the universe are prone to a reflex of dominance. The problem between China and Taiwan is not about the principle of Chinese unity, but about Beijing's demand for acts of submission to its will. The concept that China wants to defeat is the one that says Taiwan will decide when and if to make its commitment to one China a reality. In the former Soviet Union, there is evident a Russian expectation of obedience, or of some kind of fealty, that makes the settlement of conflicts like Chechenia more difficult. The successful approach to peace means that the powerful have to moderate their pretensions while the weak have to amend their aspirations.

Peace theory says that you approach settlement by sidelining issues of dominance, which are really the old war questions of who is winning and who is losing. Peace moves along, then, on an imperfect basis, dependent for quite a long time on the avoidance of at least some of the hard questions. Then, when they are looked at again, they may have changed, or the parties may have changed, which is the same thing.

The irony of many conflicts at the end of the century is that in most cases the antagonists know that they cannot achieve their objectives by war and therefore have a common interest in peace, but they carry on making war because it is easier than making peace.

The Washington Post

Yeltsin Launches Bid for Second Term

Lee Hockstader
in Yekaterinburg

AN ELECTION contest that will shape Russia's post-Communist future got under way last week as President Boris Yeltsin and Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov launched campaigns for president, offering starkly different visions of the country's economic and political order.

Yeltsin, 65, who has struggled with poor health and plummeting public support over the last year, said he was seeking a second term to prevent a reversal of Russia's move toward democracy and free-market capitalism and to avert what he said was the threat of a civil war.

Zyuganov, 51, a former Communist Party bureaucrat who has called for the reversal of such reforms as the privatization of state-run industries, was nominated at a party congress in Moscow where booksellers peddled tracts on socialism and the memoirs of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

The stakes for Yeltsin — and for Russia — in the June 16 election have been raised sharply by the resurgent and newly confident Russian Communist Party, which won a decisive victory in parliamentary elections last December by appealing to the nostalgia of the elderly and pledging to rebuild the Soviet Union, restore state control of the economy and a strong central government.

Anti-Western nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky also did well, outpolling the lone pro-Yeltsin party and confounding the experts.

But the December results were merely a dress rehearsal for the more critical June presidential elections, in which Zhirinovsky, reform economist Grigory Yavlinsky and several others are also likely to run.

Under Russia's 1993 constitution, the president is a powerful figure who can govern with few checks from parliament. A victory in June would give the Communists an opportunity to implement their platform, while a re-elected Yeltsin would have the possibility of continuing reforms in many areas even without parliamentary support.

Many of Yeltsin's allies in the reform initiatives he undertook in the first years of his presidency now believe he has effectively abandoned the cause of change and would himself be likely to move Russia toward more autocratic politics and a state-directed economy in a second term. But, as an unpopular underdog trying to stake out the political center, Yeltsin last week painted the choice between himself and the Communists in stark, even threatening colors.

"There's no strong guarantee that the changes are irreversible," Yeltsin said after a full day of campaigning in this city in the Urals, where he spent the first 55 years of his life, including 10 as an autocratic Communist Party boss.

"Russia is again at a crossroads," he declared. "We cannot afford to repeat the tragic mistakes of 1917 [when Russia was plunged into a cataclysmic civil war] and allow again a division of the country into Whites and Reds. On June 16 we will choose not only a president but our future life, the fate of Russia."

In declaring he will seek re-election, Yeltsin ignored his heart disease, single-digit approval ratings and the pleas of his wife and liberal former allies that he not run. Though he promised in May 1992 that he would "absolutely" not seek a second term, no Kremlin leader in 1,000 years has voluntarily stepped aside to make way for a successor. And Yeltsin has signaled his own intentions for months by dumping unpopular liberals from his cabinet, promising billions of dollars in new social spending and warning darkly of the dangers of a Communist comeback.

Despite those warnings, many political analysts believe Yeltsin's candidacy — which almost certainly will contribute to a split in the reformist camp — is doomed.



Market forces: The West has encouraged reforms that have fueled popular discontent PHOTO: DOD MILLER

"No matter how you arrange the possible coalitions, it is hard to imagine that the president will win," said Yegor Gaidar, a prominent economic reformer who was Yeltsin's first prime minister.

Other analysts believe Yeltsin can still parlay his unmatched political instincts and the fantastic patronage and power of his office into an upset victory. Indeed, many Russians believe Yeltsin will remain in office no matter what — even if he or his Kremlin entourage must cancel or rig the elections to do so.

MANY prominent members at the Communist congress last week expressed concern that the party must broaden its base if it is to repeat its success in the recent parliamentary races. The Communists received 22.7 percent of the nationwide party vote in December and have by far the largest bloc in the lower house of Russia's parliament.

"Priority No. 1 must be to create a coalition," said Nikolai Ryzhkov, a former Soviet prime minister who heads a small faction allied with the Communists. "If the Communist Party joins this battle alone, it will never win."

Zyuganov, the party's nominee, dismissed Yeltsin as a "weak rival." But he complained that Yeltsin has lately been borrowing the Communists' domestic agenda by promising massive new subsidies to pensioners, families, workers and the military-industrial complex.

Yeltsin, in a half-dozen appearances last week, contrasted himself with the Communists and reminded his audiences of the drudgery of daily life in the old Soviet Union.

"How quickly we forgot the long lines for bread, sugar and other food," he said. "The system for which there is so much nostalgia totally exhausted itself. That's why we had to decide on radical economic steps at the start of 1992.

"I favor reforms but not at any price. I favor a correction of course but no turning back. I stand for a Russian policy based not on utopias and dogmas but on common sense."

But Yeltsin also made a number of statements that struck Russian listeners as odd or even outlandish.

He said he had discovered about $2.8 billion in previously unheard-of funds to pay back wages owed to state enterprise workers by March, but he declined to name the source of the money. In another move bound to worry the International Monetary Fund, Russia's chief creditor, Yeltsin announced he had signed a decree to raise tariffs on imported goods in order to protect domestic producers.

In a rambling speech at the local Palace of Youth, he spoke in a croaky voice and departed from his prepared text in a number of improvisations. He misstated the name of the regional governor, suggested a mass matchmaking that would pair off unmarried young women in local factories with single army recruits on local military bases, and he proposed that two top Chechen rebel leaders be arrested and shot.

Also, in a move some observers charged was an attempt to intimidate the media on the eve of the campaign, Yeltsin accused Russia's state television and radio of peddling "a batch of lies" in its news reports and fired its chief, Oleg Poptsov. RTR, as the state television company is known, has reported critically on Yeltsin's policy in Chechnya.

Calmez Vous, Buchanan Enjoys Soufflé

COMMENT
Jim Hoagland

CHER PHILIPPE, calm down, *mon vieux*. Your fax the morning after the Iowa primary raises as many impertinent questions about American politics as pertinent ones. You French have to accept that we Americans mean no disrespect just by being different than you are, especially in politics.

You quite rightly want to know what and who Pat Buchanan represents. But did you have to dredge up all that stuff about how we have gone from a peanut farmer to a movie actor as recent presidents, to ask in horror how we can now be considering a newspaper columnist turned talk show host who has never held elective office? You went over the top, *mon ami*.

Americans do not hate politics. They hate politicians. You train your leaders through electoral politics. We humiliate ours. Your presidents start as mayors, serve as congressmen, become ministers in the government and often prime minister before running for the top job. You made François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac each run three times before electing them president. The French want to be sure that you really want the job before they will vote for you, as a British colleague notes.

Our primary electorates and media see cause for suspicion in such experience. Look at the drama and mystery of this faddish season: A dashing but reluctant Army general is briefly the man with all the answers, which he refuses to tell. He confirms for many that he would be the perfect president by refusing to run. A demi-billionaire businessman also lacking elective experience becomes the center of the next political fantasy *du jour*, which lasts an entire month.

Steve Forbes' campaign may have crashed and burned in Iowa. As long as Forbes was not seen as a real candidate, he had a chance. But the millions spent on advertising and the heavy exposure on television news and talk shows made him look to Iowa's Republicans like, well, an ambitious politician. *Fatale* in this campaign.

And look at poor Bob Dole. This narrow a win in his home region adds credibility to an idea experienced Democratic Party operatives are spreading with great glee: Dole is looking like Mondale, 1984. That is, the Senate majority leader is going to get chipped and nicked (when he is not upset) all along the primary road to this summer's nominating convention. Dole has the support, organization and money to stagger home the winner; but he will have been bled dry before the autumn campaign against an incumbent facing no primary challenge.

That's the Dems' wishful scenario. A much riskier one takes shape in the wake of Iowa: The Republican convention may begin without any candidate having enough delegates to win the nomination on the first ballot. The candidate field could break up like a Scud warhead hitting the atmosphere, leaving the way clear for the still coy, still reluctant general to be drafted on his terms.

Well, you did ask me, in rather desperate terms, if there is still any Republican alternative to *l'isolationist*.

First, you must not overreact to Buchanan's ferocious campaign xenophobia. You already know that in 1992 he drove to the rallies where he denounced foreign imports in his own Mercedes. Yes, he changed cars when that got into the press. But what you probably missed was the Associated Press's poll of Republican candidates this year on their favorite desserts. Dole, Lugar and the others responded with apple pie and hot fudge sundaes. Buchanan's favorite according to the AP? Grand Marnier soufflé. Can a man who prefers orange liqueur soufflés for dessert really be an enemy of the French people and international harmony? I think not. *Calmez vous, mes amis.*

Actually, Buchanan's strong showing in Louisiana and Iowa suggests that similar political currents are surfacing in America and France. In GOP primaries we are seeing what you saw in the strikes and protests in the streets of Paris two months ago: discontent and insecurity over poorly explained changes in the world economy that threaten jobs, and careers, locally.

Buchanan's campaign feeds on the same anxieties about "globalization" that sparked the French protests. He proposes protectionism and disengagement from the world as answers to these complicated problems. That makes him our favorite fantasy non-politician of the moment.

You ask when the Republicans, who have won seven of the last 11 presidential elections, decided to copy the Democrats by subjecting their candidates to primaries dominated by extremist arguments. What a rude question — even for a Frenchman.

Zapatistas Take First Step to Peace

Molly Moore in Mexico City

ZAPATISTA rebels last week signed the first phase of a peace accord with the Mexican government that eventually could end their two-year-old guerrilla conflict.

The agreement on indigenous Indian rights is the first of six aimed at reestablishing peace in the troubled southern state of Chiapas. It is considered a breakthrough that could lead to more agreements which, added together, could end a standoff beginning New Year's Day 1994 when the bloody insurrection broke out.

"Thousands . . . of men and women were consulted," said Zapatista commander Tacho, reading a statement from the Zapatista National Liberation Army in the central square of the Chiapas mountain town of San Andres Larrainzar. "Ninety-six percent spoke in favor of accepting and formalizing with the supreme government the minimum accords, the first in this long process of constructing a just and honorable peace."

Negotiators spent nearly 10 months debating details of the first accord, which includes proposals for constitutional amendments giving Mexico's estimated 15 million Indians special rights based on ancient traditions and culture. These first proposals, however, do not address the most controversial indigenous rights issues of land control and autonomy.

Tacho said rebel supporters asked their leaders to continue pushing demands for greater land reforms and more autonomy for Mexico's Indians, long neglected by the government.

It has remained intransigent on land reform issues, particularly demands that it give up claims to mineral and oil deposits under Indian-owned land.

Negotiators accepted the details of the first accord during meetings last month. Zapatista leaders took the proposals back to their villages for informal polls of the residents, mostly peasant farmers, affected by the decisions.

Last week's round of peace talks got off to a shaky start when Zapatista negotiators, under escort by the International Committee of the Red Cross, showed up 10 hours late for the first meeting, much to the annoyance of government representatives.

Based on the first round of accords, many observers say the peace talks could drag on for years.



Marcos, the Zapatista leader, with Indian villagers in a picture taken a year ago during peace negotiations

Mistrust Dogs Angola Cease-Fire

Lynne Duke in Negage

IN THIS land ravaged by combat, peace looks a lot like war. A peace accord signed 15 months ago brought 20 years of civil war to an official end, but the cease-fire is riddled with bullet holes. Encamped in strategic positions, government and rebel forces continue a tense face-off. Arms keep flowing through this southwestern African country's porous borders.

But amid this mistrust and chaos, there stood Alberto Jose Carloso earlier this month, part of a tattered contingent of nervous rebels of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) who emerged from the bush and laid down their guns here at Negage, 150 miles northeast of Luanda, the capital. Finished with the fighting that took seven of his years, Carloso, 20, was one of about 9,000 UNITA guerrillas who had turned themselves in at four camps around the country by this month's deadline — in what could signal the beginning of the end of one of Africa's most tenacious armed movements.

The disarmament and encampment of guerrillas was barely half of the predicted number but it constituted the most important step mandated by the November 1994 Lusaka peace accord — which ended the conflict between UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, and the government of President Jose Eduardo dos Santos's Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

Following independence in 1975, Angola became a Cold War battleground. The United States gave covert and official assistance to UNITA, complementing the troops and aid the rebel movement received from South Africa. The MPLA's patrons were the Soviet Union and Cuba, which sent thousands of troops.

After the end of the Cold War, the battle here became a raw fight for national power, killing a thousand people a day at the war's height, producing 3 million refugees and causing an estimated 70,000 Angolans to lose limbs as the result of mine explosions. The war virtually ruined the economy of sub-Saharan Africa's fourth-largest market, with UNITA using the diamond mines to finance its struggle and the MPLA using oil revenues.

The demobilization of UNITA troops was achieved with difficulty, hard up against a February 8 deadline for a U.N. review of its Angolan mandate. In a visit with Savimbi last month, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright extracted a commitment from him to send 16,500 troops to quartering camps before the deadline.

UNITA claims to have about 70,000 troops, although a Western diplomat said the number probably is half that. Still, barely 9,000 showed up at the quartering sites by the deadline. (Reuter news agency reported from Luanda that by Sunday, the United Nations had counted 14,000 guerrillas entering the camps.)

Despite the shortfall, the United Nations renewed its peacekeeping commitment here for another three months and U.S. and European officials hailed UNITA's effort to comply.

Labor Looks to Grow From Grass Roots

Frank Swoboda and Martha M. Hamilton

FOUR MONTHS after toppling Lane Kirkland and the entrenched leadership of the AFL-CIO, new chief John Sweeney and his political supporters have an ambitious plan to restore organized labor's political and economic clout by building a social movement outside of Washington.

Using a populist, grass-roots approach to politics and organizing, Sweeney hopes to revive an institution long in decline and struggling to deal with the forces of global competition and technological change.

Sweeney, with the backing of some of the federation's largest unions, is starting with a top-to-bottom reorganization at the AFL-CIO's marble and granite headquarters across Lafayette Square from the White House. Several members of the longtime staff are on their way out.

In their place is a cadre of "fortysomething" activists, many of whom came to the labor movement from a background in civil rights, community and anti-war organizing.

The Sweeney team is refocusing labor's spending with plans to increase political spending sevenfold, to $35 million this year, and has targeted 75 congressional districts for large, get-out-the-vote efforts. It also plans to raise another $20 million for organizing new members.

Part of that money will go into recruiting 1,000 young activists from college campuses and union halls for what they'll call Union Summer, a community and labor organizing campaign modeled after the civil-rights movement's Freedom Summer.

It's a deliberately different image from Bal Harbour, Florida, where labor leaders this week will have their last chance to lounge in poolside cabanas at a resort hotel during the labor federation's annual winter meeting. Sweeney doesn't know where next year's meeting will be, but he's pushing for something decidedly less opulent and in a region where labor is running an organizing campaign.

Critics say it may be too late for organized labor to save itself.

"The forces at work in the new age of Adam Smith are just too powerful for the union movement," said Leo Troy, an economist at Rutgers University in Newark. "To put it bluntly, you have competition confronting a monopoly. Competition undermines a monopoly, and competitive forces are increasing. Whatever the union movement decides to do, I don't think it will make much difference."

Sweeney himself warned last spring that unions have become "irrelevant" to the vast majority of American workers. But others aren't willing to write labor off.

"There's a sense of optimism and energy the labor movement hasn't seen in decades," said Harley Shaiken, a longtime commentator on labor at the University of California at Berkeley. "That doesn't change the enormous obstacles that labor faces. What's different is that there's now a sense that labor is going to put up a strong fight. There's no certainty that labor is going to win."

Statistics released this month by the Labor Department show a continuing decline in union membership. Organized labor now represents 10.4 percent of the nation's private-sector workers, down from more than a third of the work force half a century ago.

But even when public-sector members are included, unions represent a bare 14.9 percent of all wage and salary earners, down from 15.5 percent just a year ago.

The AFL-CIO is not a union itself. It is a trade association for unions created in 1955 by a merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Back then labor was powerful not only in politics and the workplace, but also in communities. An explosion of union organizing in the nation's basic manufacturing industries in the mid-1930s had helped propel a largely unskilled, blue-collar work force into the economic middle class.

Industrial unions had helped create good wages, job security and such benefits as pensions, paid vacations and health insurance that are taken for granted by many workers today.

But in recent decades, the nation's economic base shifted away from manufacturing to service and high-tech industries in which unions were weak. Labor leadership, with some notable exceptions, was slow to catch up to those changes and to adjust to the needs of women, Asians, Hispanics and blacks.

TODAY, AFL-CIO membership stands at 13 million, the lowest level since 1969 and barely more than the 12.6 million members it had when the federation was founded in 1955.

The answer, say the new union activists, is to take the labor movement outside the Capital Beltway and into the streets. "We're up to here in Washington-think. What we need now is a grass-roots base," said a Sweeney aide.

That means refocusing labor's image, resources, spending and politics. "The clout can't come from the money," said the AFL-CIO's new political director, Steve Rosenthal, 43, a former top aide to Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich. "The centerpiece is really the notion of rebuilding our activist base."

At the heart of change in the AFL-CIO is the newly created Organizing Department. Headed by Richard Bensinger, 45, an activist with 15 years organizing experience, the department will first have to persuade the majority of the AFL-CIO's 78 member unions that organizing is the key to their future.

The new approach to organizing, which draws on the tactics of the late community organizer Saul Alinsky, will be on display during this Union Summer. Alinsky organized the economically oppressed in cities across America with tactics that included sending black picketers to the suburban homes of white slumlords and dropping dead rats on the steps of city hall.

The AFL-CIO hopes to build a cadre of activists across the country to register voters, work for legislation and organize workers at job sites. "Our members are participants in a broader community. Community issues are labor issues, too," said Sweeney.

Bensinger sees attracting young people to the cause as the key to effective organization. It is also the seed of the budding social movement Sweeney wants to build.

The AFL-CIO is coordinating some of its political organizing efforts with such groups as abortion-rights advocates and environmentalists, as it did in Oregon last month to help elect Rep. Ron Wyden to the Senate seat vacated by Bob Packwood. Wyden benefited from an activist base of 300 union members in Oregon who supported his candidacy.

In addition to the $35 million the federation expects to spend on political races, the AFL-CIO will also benefit from the contribution of skilled political operatives detailed from individual unions to work in campaigns. Rosenthal said the goal is to be "seamless from legislation to politics."

Sweeney says critics should wait until the end of his first term before attempting to judge the success or failure of the new AFL-CIO.

Spectre of Iran haunts Bahrain

David Hirst

VIRTUALLY every Arab regime that counts has rallied to Sheikh Issa bin Salman al-Khalifa. The ruler since 1961 of the tiny island state of Bahrain is in trouble again.

The Khalifas are orthodox Sunni Muslims. Most of their subjects are Shi'ites, and poorer than the Sunnis. Of late, they have been disproportionately unemployed. They cannot serve in the army or police, and discrimination is growing in other state departments.

They are the natural breeding ground for opposition. They tend to look for support to Shi'ite Iran, which once laid claim to the island.

Shi'ite clergy, headed by Abd al-Amir al-Jamri, are leading the latest unrest, which erupted after the banning of political sermons in mosques in mid-January.

The government says it has arrested about 600 people — the opposition says 2,000 — including Sheikh Jamri and a leading Sunni lawyer, Ahmad Shemlan. They are accused of inciting or participating in "arson and sabotage".

Three young men "confessed" to being trained by "terrorist elements abroad". Iran is said to mastermind this "foreign conspiracy". Bahrainis "sitting abroad without national roots" convey its orders to agents within. The state security court, officials say, will furnish irrefutable evidence of Iranian involvement.

But even if such proof exists — which is doubtful — it will not alter the fact that the Khalifas' troubles are of their own making.

The Khalifas are a growing tribe whose 800 menfolk abuse political power to muscle in on state and private enterprise. On this archipelago of only 260 square miles, they have grabbed about half the land, including entire islands, for themselves.

They built the opulent $90 million Meridien Hotel with a loan from social security funds, which they have not repaid. Shi'ite unemployment is so high because princes earn "royalties" from Asians — often unemployed — whom they import as workers.

That the recurrent dissent stems from a broad-based national movement has never been clearer than now. This phase began when Sheikh Jamri, a former deputy, helped muster 25,000 signatures for a petition demanding a return to constitutional rule.

Not one Arab government has questioned Bahrain's indictment of Iran as the sole cause of the growing unrest. The Gulf Co-operation Council — six conservative monarchies led by Saudi Arabia — formally endorses that view.

It is not just the Arabs. The United States, too, sees "Iranian elements" as the villains.

One discordant note comes from the Gulf's only parliament in Kuwait, where eight deputies say Bahrainis are entitled to a parliament.

It has become unfashionable to praise Kuwait, or to celebrate the reasons for its US-led "liberation". Yet the US should be pleased that, thanks to its sacrifice, Kuwaiti MPs are still free to denounce the Khalifas' "medieval mentality". It seems the US, obsessed by Iran, is less free itself.

Fighting Liberia's other war

Drug abuse is rising as rebel commanders supply child soldiers, writes **Cindy Shiner** in Monrovia

COLONEL Abraham Kromah is fighting his own private war in Liberia's six-year civil conflict. His enemies are the drugs ravaging the country's youth, a scourge he believes led to the death of his 14-year-old brother, who was forced to join a rebel army.

"The rest [three other siblings] died at the hands of child soldiers who never knew what they were doing because they were under the influence of drugs," said Col Kromah, aged 30, deputy director of the national police and the head of Interpol in Monrovia. He said his brother was killed in battle while on drugs provided by his commanders.

Before the war broke out in December 1989, Liberia was used as a transit point for drugs passed from south-east Asia through Nigeria. But now the country has become a drug consumer, adding another problem to poverty and civil strife.

The United Nations drug control programme is aware of the menace. It opened an office in Liberia last month.

"Today it's all over the place," said Edward Grant, a psychiatrist at the John F Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Monrovia, who counsels and treats drug-addicted youths. "You can get heroin, you can get cocaine."

Dr Grant said the number of hard-core drug addicts in the capital had doubled during the war and that he had treated at least 75 youngsters for withdrawal symptoms or drug-induced psychosis.

Col Kromah said his office was working with Nigeria's national drug law enforcement agency in trying to stem the flow of narcotics through Monrovia. But he feared a rise in the influx of drugs because direct flights from Nigeria had resumed on ADC airlines, dubbed here African Drugs Carrier.

Nigeria is Africa's largest transshipment point for hard drugs from south-east Asia. Col Kromah said his office seized nearly $2.5 million worth of heroin and cocaine last year — nearly all of it from Nigeria. Nigerian peacekeepers in Liberia have been implicated.

"We are quite aware of these problems, but just how much we are able to do about it depends on our resource capacity," said Joseph Jallah, who heads Liberia's national interministerial drug committee.

Fighting the drug trade has never been a priority for Liberia's governments. An interim administration signed international conventions on drug trafficking last year, and Mr Jallah said he hoped to toughen legislation against drug traffickers.



The Week in Britain James Lewis

Economy gives Major a much needed boost

HAD THE FURORE over the Scott report not got in the way, the Government's morale might have been boosted by the latest set of economic indicators. Unemployment fell in January by a surprising 29,300 to to 2.2 million — the lowest level for five years. And the underlying annual rate of inflation fell from 3 per cent to 2.8 per cent, which pointed to a further cut in interest rates in the near future.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George, has for nearly a year been (unsuccessfully) demanding higher interest rates because the Bank has been forecasting a growth in inflation. But it now concedes that the Government has a good chance of hitting its inflation target of 2.5 per cent or less in two years' time, so Mr George is unlikely to resist further modest cuts which could bring base rates down to around 5.5 per cent by the end of the year.

At 7.9 per cent, Britain now has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe, but many economists were puzzled by the sharpness of the January fall, which seemed inconsistent with what is undoubtedly a slowing economy.

Just as the IRA resumed its bombing campaign, the figures provided powerful evidence of [illegible] the peace dividend has meant to Northern Ireland, where unemployment has fallen to its lowest level for 15 years.

Will Hutton, page 19

A NEW DRUG, said to be capable of halving the rejection rate of transplanted organs, was hailed as the most exciting development in transplant medicine for a decade. But the use of CellCept, manufactured by Roche, will cost about £3,000 a year for each patient treated, and its claimed economic benefits will have to be justified to the National Health Service.

One in 10 organ transplants fail in the first few weeks because of rejection problems. And about half of all kidney transplants fail in the first 10 years for the same reason. Specialists argue that CellCept could lead to significant savings over the longer term, as well as saving lives by preventing kidney patients needing second or third transplants or returning to expensive dialysis.

Studies on kidney transplant patients in the US, Europe, Canada and Australia suggest that the use of CellCept can halve the frequency of rejection problems. And, although studies have mostly involved kidneys, researchers say the drug should also prevent rejection of other organs such as the heart, lungs and liver.

MORE CONTROVERSIAL research claims — that radioactive radon gas in the air could be the link behind high-voltage power pylons and an increased risk of cancer — were welcomed as "a major breakthrough" by lawyers who have been trying to sue electricity generating companies over childhood leukaemias.

A research team at Bristol university, led by Professor Dennis Henshaw, suggests that radon, which is naturally present in the atmosphere, is attracted by electromagnetic fields in the vicinity of pylons and domestic electrical equipment. The National Radiological Protection Board, which has dismissed claims of risks from living under high-voltage power lines, also dismissed the Bristol research findings as "implausible".

The Leukaemia Research Council, more cautiously, said that while the Bristol research did not prove that electromagnetic fields caused leukaemia, it did point to the need for further investigation into the effects of electromagnetic fields and radon.

NEARLY 9 per cent of applications from UK residents wanting places at university this autumn are from students of Asian ethnic origin — mainly Indian and Pakistani — according to the college and universities admissions service. Another 3.1 per cent are from black students. In each case, the figure is about double the proportion of such ethnic categories in the population as a whole.

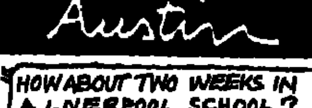
Applications from UK residents are down 2 per cent on last year, mainly due to the Government's abolition of allowances to mature students.

BELT-TIGHTENING measures by public authorities produced some Dickensian ideas for saving money. In Liverpool, which needs to save £38.5 million to stay within government-imposed spending limits, officials dreamed up a scheme to cut the size of school meals by 10 per cent to save £264,000 a year.

The clumsily-worded plan, which suggested that the smaller portions would only affect poorer children, who get free meals, had to be abandoned because the city has contractually agreed the standards and quantities of meals until 2000.

A slightly more caring touch was offered by a hospital authority in north Cumbria, one of the areas hardest hit by recent snows, when it decided that nurses who failed to make it to work through the snowdrifts could choose between losing a day's pay or a day's holiday.

An official explained that an agreement was being reached between managers and staff on the options available, "with the emphasis on giving staff the opportunity to choose which best suits their personal circumstances."





Sea Empress, its bow submerged, drifts across the entrance of Milford Haven estuary PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL REES

Disaster alert after huge oil spill

CRUDE OIL was still spilling from the ruptured hull of the deserted supertanker, Sea Empress, on Tuesday as a flotilla of tugs struggled to prevent the ship breaking up off the Welsh coast, *writes Owen Bowcott*.

Laden with 140,000 tonnes of North Sea crude oil, the ship was drifting bow down in exposed waters at the entrance to the Milford Haven estuary.

Coastguards said that about one third of Sea Empress's cargo had probably leaked from the damaged hull, spreading oil along the Pembrokeshire coast.

Meanwhile, salvage experts were working on crisis plans to avert an environmental disaster, and a massive clean-up operation was under way, with planes spraying the spreading oil slick.

A colony of 3,000 rare green rockpool starfish has been wiped out by the spillage, according to wildlife groups in West Wales.

The grounding of the tanker beneath St Ann's Head is the second accident in almost exactly the same spot in the past four months.

The tanker has no protective outer hull and was manned by a Russian crew working under a foreign flag of convenience.

The incident began at 8pm on Thursday last week when the 147,000-tonne ship, managed by Glasgow company Acomarit (UK) Ltd and carrying a pilot, went aground at the entrance to Milford Haven where Texaco has an oil refinery. The reasons for the accident are still not clear.

An inquiry has been launched by the Department of Transport into why tough measures drawn up for ships in British waters after the Braer disaster three years ago failed to prevent the Milford Haven incident.

Truce on Dearing inquiry

John Carvel

AN EXTRAORDINARY political truce was declared between the Conservative and Labour parties this week when they agreed to pass the thorny problems of university expansion to a national committee of inquiry under Sir Ron Dearing, with a recommendation that he should report after the general election.

Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, said she wanted to take a bipartisan approach to issues affecting "the future of our nation and its economic development".

David Blunkett, her Labour shadow, said he welcomed the "bipartisan initiative on this vital issue".

However, both are expected to draw political advantage from an inquiry which may allow them to postpone difficult decisions on whether the traditional student grant should be abolished in favour of loans repayable through a supplementary rate of income tax or national insurance after graduation.

Mrs Shephard consulted Mr Blunkett about who should head the inquiry, and he is expecting to be allowed to nominate members of the team.

Sir Ron, chairman of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, has been asked "to make recommendations on how the shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the UK over the next 20 years".

Proposals should be "within the constraints of affordability". There should be "maximum participation in initial higher education by young and mature students and lifetime learning by adults, insofar as this can be shown to be consistent with the needs of the nation and the future labour market".

Gas cooker link to asthma

WOMEN who use gas cookers are twice as likely to suffer asthma-like symptoms such as breathlessness and wheezing than those who use electric appliances, *writes Chris Mihill*. Up to half the symptoms could be reduced if people abandoned gas cookers. The finding is confined to women.

The products given off by gas particularly nitrogen dioxide, could damage the lining of the airways, making people more vulnerable to respiratory problems.

Deborah Jarvis and colleagues from the department of public health medicine at St Thomas's hospital, London, say more research is needed but in theory the prevalence of wheezing and breathlessness in women could be cut by between 8 and 48 per cent if cooking with gas was abandoned.

Global warming disaster 'imminent'

John Vidal

ONE of Britain's leading scientists warned last week that it might already be too late to prevent some of the world's most densely populated regions being drowned within a century by the sea level rise brought on by the burning of fossil fuels.

Southern China, Bangladesh and Egypt face massive loss of land and the spectre of millions of environmental refugees, Sir John Houghton, chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, told the Royal Society.

In one of the most pessimistic updates yet on the likely impact of global warming, Sir John, chairman of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and a professor of atmospheric physics at Oxford university, further warned that water supplies throughout the world would be severely affected.

Food supplies might not be affected by global warming. "Some regions may be able to grow more, others less, but the distribution of production will change because of changing water availability. The regions likely to be adversely affected are those in developing countries in the sub-tropics with rapidly growing populations. There may be large numbers of environmental refugees."

Class struggle

THE FUTURE of Britain's most successful Muslim school, founded by Yusuf Islam, the former pop singer Cat Stevens, is under threat because Saudi Arabia has withdrawn 85 per cent of its annual cash subsidy, *writes Seumas Milne*.

Two months ago, the Saudi ambassador in London complained in a private letter to defence minister Prince Sultan of Mr Islam's "insulting" criticisms of the Saudi regime.

These were said to include an appeal for the release of imprisoned supporters of the dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari, who is fighting a British deportation order to Dominica.

Recently, children were sent home from the 300-strong Islamia School in Brent, north London, because the heating system broke down. Some 10-year-olds had to stand during science lessons because of a shortage of chairs.

But with Islamia's girls' secondary topping the league tables in Brent, there is still a waiting list of 1,000.

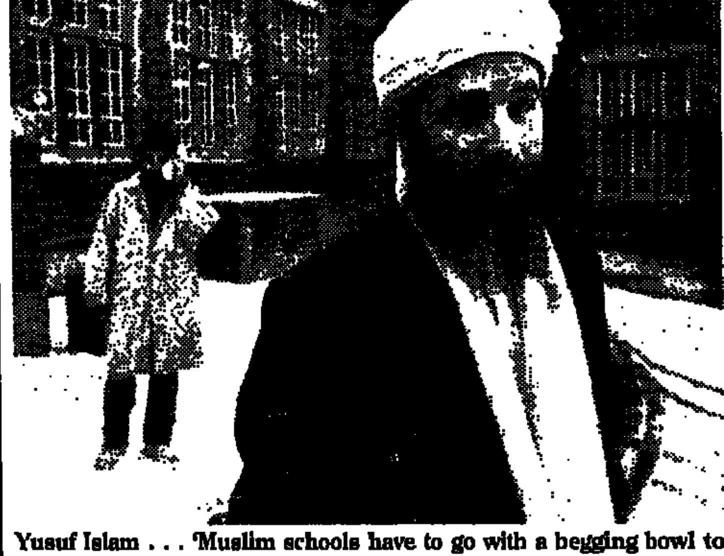
Yusuf Islam bought the original school premises and has been subsidising Islamia fees to the tune of £250,000 a year. Saudi Arabia donated £1.5 million to buy the current building and had been donating around £150,000 a year to help plug the gap between the school's annual £450,000 fee income and its £750,000 budget.

This year, donations from Saudi Arabia — usually made during the month of Ramadan — have dropped to around £25,000. The cut appears to be the direct result of the letter from the Saudi ambassador, Ghazi al-Gusaibi — leaked to the Guardian last December — calling on Saudi Arabia's powerful defence minister "not to give Yusuf Islam any further help until we have evidence that his views are changing". As well as his embarrassing intervention on behalf of Saudi dissidents — in fact, Mr Islam's private letter merely expressed concern and asked for information — the former musician was also accused of opposing the 1991 Gulf war and failing to attend the celebrations of the kingdom's national day on September 23 last year.

Speaking in his office at Islamia school, where he is chairman of the governors, Yusuf Islam defended the costly decision to raise the imprisonment of Professor al-Mas'ari's supporters and called the decision to deport the Saudi exile "an ominous turn".

"We try to be unbiased," he said, "but if I was locked up I hope someone would ask about me. It is only wishing for your brother what you wish for yourself."

He said the UK government had put Britain's 44 Muslim schools in a position where they had to "go with a begging bowl to more affluent Muslim countries" rather than funding them itself.



Yusuf Islam . . . 'Muslim schools have to go with a begging bowl to affluent Muslim countries' PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHY IS it that music and literature can sometimes move us, literally, to tears, but paintings and sculpture never seem to do so?

WITH music and literature, time is an intrinsic part of the work of art: there is a beginning, duration and an end. Emotional tension can be induced and cathartic release becomes possible.

What sets painting and sculpture apart from other art forms is the arbitrary time element. A painting may create visual tension, but to look at an abstract painting is akin to reading randomly selected sentences in a book: it is highly unlikely to function as drama.

The incidental time aspect of a painting creates another problem. You know when you've heard the music, read the book, seen the film. But at what point can you say you have seen the painting? When you've glanced at it? When you've read the signature? When you've read the title label? In a gallery the time you spend looking at a particular painting might be determined by what else there is to look at, who you are with, how crowded it is etc. Not responding to a painting might mean you haven't given it enough time — or that it simply has no meaning (to you). But how to tell the difference? — *Thomas Eisl, London*

CAN anyone explain why what appear to be fleurs-de-lis form part of the Bosnian flag?

THE FLAG of Bosnia-Herzegovina is white with a blue shield in the centre charged with six gold fleurs-de-lis and a white diagonal stripe. This shield is the arms of the Kotromanic family who ruled Bosnia before it was taken into the Turkish Empire. During much of this period Bosnia was a dependency of Hungary. Stjepan Kotromanic became *ban* (or governor) of Bosnia in 1314 and his son Stjepan Tvrtko became king, by arrangement with Hungary, in 1377. It is thought that the arms relate to those of Hungary, which at that time was ruled by the Anjou dynasty. This was itself a collateral of the French royal family — hence the fleurs-de-lis. The Bosnian dynasty lasted until 1463.

In 1991 the new parliament decided that the Kotromanic arms had the best claim for resurrection, although its exact colours were unknown. However, golden lilies on blue, like those of France, seemed logical. The group also noted that there is a unique subspecies of lily found on Mount Igman, *Lilium bosniacum g-beck*, which they proposed as a symbol of peace, and suggested it should be used as the finial of flagstaffs. — *(Dr) William Crampton, Director, Flag Institute, Chester*

WHY DO the cockroaches in our bathroom always die on their backs?

BECAUSE their lungs are located on their underside — or so my pest control man says. — *Janet Meaburn, Charleston, South Carolina, USA*

Any answers?

WHAT'S the point of having your cake if you are not able to eat it? — ***Geardid Cassidy, Glasnevin, Dublin***

IN JERSEY, information signs are written in Portuguese as well as English. Why? — ***Ben Ramm, Heaton Mersey, Cheshire***

IN Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper there is an extra arm which does not belong to any of the disciples. It is holding a knife and appears behind the figure reputed to be Judas. Why is the arm there? Is there any explanation, apart from a crude symbolism of betrayal? — ***Ela Ginalska, London***

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ

Letter from Australia Janet Riddell

At the end of the road

WE BURIED my father in hot autumn sunshine in South Australia's Riverland, near a gum tree clump outside the small settlement of Renmark. Standing by the graveside I felt my patent black city shoes sink into the soft sand and when I emptied the traditional first clump of soil over the coffin, it trickled through my fingers. Here soil is not solid but fine red dust. Rain rarely comes. The climate is so dry I like to think Dad may lie preserved and undisturbed for as long as the pharaohs.

Last-century British pioneers, the Chaffey Brothers, saw this place of constant sunshine by the Murray, second longest river in Australia, and realised if only it would rain it could be Paradise. They introduced irrigation systems to bring the water to the soil, allowing generations of settlers — first the British, then Italians, Greeks, Turks — to grow grapes and oranges, peaches and olives. Unwittingly their toil lowered the water table and raised the salt levels so that much of Paradise is now wasteland.

You can reach Renmark by long straight bitumen road, eight hours north of Melbourne including pit stops. But I flew in a conventional 50-seater to the provincial city of Mildura, then illegally hitched a lift across the Victoria State border in the back of the two-seater mail plane. It was my father's 75th birthday and I was in a hurry.

The day before, he telephoned and told me he was going to die and, locked into his provider role until the end, he'd hidden $1,000 in small notes in his sock drawer "to tide you over till probate". I counted the minutes in the mail van and my small daughter huddled around the Australia Post bag, seduced from grief and air sickness by the sight of the wide silver river snaking through red cliffs just 50 feet below.

Dumped at the airstrip — literally a cleared strip between stunted mallee trees, a tin shed and a Telecom booth — we stood by the wire fence. My daughter stalked a kangaroo. I cursed my oversight in not bringing coins and listened in case the pay phone should ring for me. We were saved by Roma, the taxi driver who also drives the ambulance. "Knew you'd be coming in," she announced. "I took your dad away this morning."

He would have been pleased. Small-town telepathy and a sense of belonging were what kept him in this place. Sixty years before, he told me once, he decided not to be like his father, an itinerant fruit picker who carted his children from town to town.

At 15 he declared his father should settle down and become respectable. The family happened to be in Renmark, and so this is where my father settled and married my mother, who was similarly disenchanted with her father, a member of the International Workers of the World. He ran a commune just up river until comradeship collapsed because the water pump broke down and the government reneged on a loan to buy another.

MY FATHER saw his family only once after that, when I turned 15 and grew rebellious and daily declared my intention to shake off the dust of this place and move on. "It's your grandfather's 75th birthday. I suppose I'd better take you to meet him," was all he said.

Widowed years before, Grandpa had retired in the last place on the picker's run, Murray Bridge, in greener country, near Adelaide, and sought solace with a retired lady of sufficient means to own a cottage. We left early and drove too fast through the morning to miss the worst of the heat and the wind that would blow up the red dust. But still we were too late. Grandpa was already laid out in the front room when we got there. I remember he had a smile on his face, just like Dad's, sort of knowing, accepting — and expecting.

A Country Diary

Jeremy Smith

***MACQUARIE ISLAND*, South Pacific Ocean: At 80-90cm tall, *Aptenodytes patagonica* is the second largest penguin, and it is also the most beautiful. King Penguins' heads and necks are breathtaking, and they seem to know it, flaunting them to each other in their displays. Their long straight bills are black and orange, and their otherwise black heads have striking orange patches on each side. The colour extends down the sides of the neck to nearly meet under the chin, then spreads out over the throat in a widening orange necktie merging through yellow with the white of the breast. The back of the neck is blue-grey, with a fine, black line separating it from the orange throat. They are awesomely magnificent birds.**

There are lots of them on Macquarie Island, about three-quarters of a million, I'm told. At the station they are familiar neighbours at this time of year, though many do not look their best as they are moulting. Normally they stay at sea for so long that when they first come ashore goose barnacles are attached to their stumpy grey tails. They constantly preen themselves to release small feathers which blow in the wind to form drifts in the lea of rocks and buildings. If you sit down near them they will walk up to investigate, even giving you little exploratory nips. You can gaze straight into their dark brown eyes, and wonder what thoughts and memories might lie behind them.

Not a lot of thought probably: they don't give the impression of intelligence. They were sadly easy to catch early this century when thousands upon thousands were slaughtered for their oil. The unfortunate birds were rounded up, killed, then boiled down in "digesters", which still remain as large rusted cylinders near the beaches.

An eroding bank close to the station reveals layers of King Penguin bones, dated at several thousand years old, marking this as a breeding site over hundreds of generations until their extermination in the digesters. Fortunately, another large colony to the south was exploited less completely, and enough birds survived for that population to recover. In fact, they have now quite run out of suitable real estate, and are gradually establishing satellite colonies on suitable beaches up the coast.

A few days ago chicks were reported near the station, and I walked down to check for myself. Sure enough, in the middle of a hundred or so Kings just standing or lying about, there were five more purposeful birds with brood pouches extended over their black, upturned toes. Protruding portions of two black chicks were visible, a large fluffy bottom with two extended feet, and a small saurian head. I will keep an eye on their fortunes. It is exciting to be witnessing the first step in the renaissance of what was, and may be again, a vast breeding aggregation of the world's most gorgeous penguin.

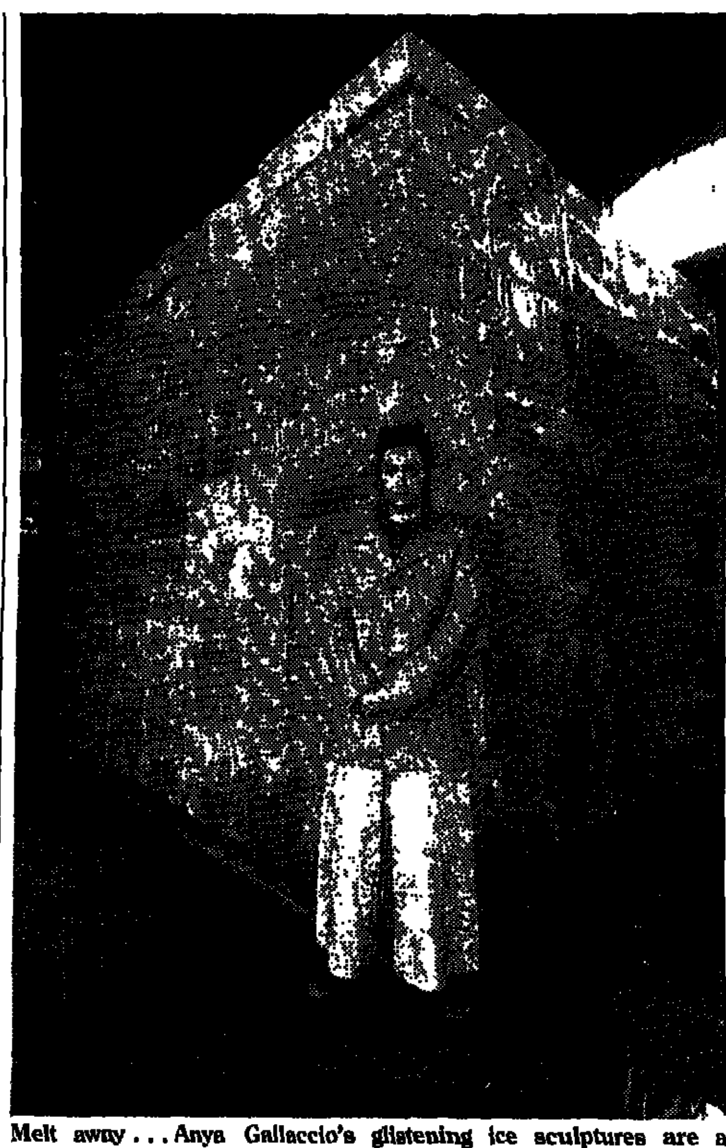
The ice maiden cometh

ART
Adrian Searle

THAT, jokes Anya Gallaccio, pointing into a side room as we wander the disused, silent engine halls of the Wapping Hydraulic Pumping Station in east London, "is my 'pre-menstrual housewife' piece". On the floor squat slabs of ice, each the size of a railway sleeper, leaking quietly on to the cement. Atop the ice sits an electric iron, apparently still plugged in. The surface of the ice is indented with the imprint of the hot iron. The ice woman cometh: I have an image of Gallaccio the fractious *hausfrau*, ironing the ice, blowing the fuses amid clouds of steam. Luckily, the iron isn't working.

This was just a prelude: down in the cavernous space of the abandoned boiler-room stands a glistening monument rising between the iron pillars of the empty, high-ceilinged space: a three-metre high, four-metre long, three-metre wide block of ice, standing in the spreading puddles as it melts, glistening in the gloom. It has been built from a stack of the same 200-kilo slabs, carted here from an ice factory in Kent. Buried within this transient monument — and barely visible within the ice's bluish translucence — is a boulder of Cheshire rock salt.

The salt's granular efflorescence has leeched its way between the slabs, forming crystalline scabs on the surface. Also entombed is a strip-light, illuminating the work from within. This is overdoing things a bit, as the ice itself, refracting the daylight, generates its own glow.



Melt away . . . Anya Gallaccio's glistening ice sculptures are a memorial to loss and impermanence PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Ice sculptures are familiar enough as elaborate decorations at tacky banquets and cruise-ship dinner dances, but while we're used to frozen flights of swans and fanciful, glacial castles, this is chill-out minimalism. Gallaccio invariably uses impermanent materials — decaying, mouldering carpets of cut roses and tulips; walls painted with a slowly festering layer of chocolate; table-tops heaped with mounds of guttering from candles.

Her work has been described as a feminist spin on muscle-bound, male art forms — turning the colour fields of Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko into a fetid, perfumed bower, or replacing the arid stone arrangements of Richard Long with meadows, by way of the florist's shop. But her work is more than a didactic postmodern twist on stereotyped masculinity.

"Before the flowers of friendship faded, friendship faded," wrote Gertrude Stein wistfully; Gallaccio's work is always a kind of memorial to loss. Loss and absence are the leitmotifs of the art of our age. The death of the artist's brother has been a signal, albeit understated theme in Gallaccio's work, and she says of the latest ice piece that she wanted it to invoke an "uneasy, queasy feeling", the kind of feeling that presages love going wrong: "It is about human relationships, and I'm not very good at them."

The salt melts the ice from within, eating away from the inside, destabilising the structure. The outer surface is melting too, creating runnels, odd accidental pockets and gargoyles you can stick your finger into.

The feeling, as one runs one's hands over the ice, is both sensual and disquieting. What can't be avoided either is that this sculpture is physically dangerous. As the ice began to melt it fused the blocks together, but as further melting goes on, who knows whether it will disintegrate decorously or whether whole faces of the structure will slide off without warning. The change in the weather, and the rock of salt, are doing their work.

MUCH of Gallaccio's work looks like minimalism, but it is as much concerned with the drama of content, referentiality and metaphor, something the reductivist artists of the 1960s sought to avoid and deny. The object and the empty space around it were all there was — and that was all the viewer got. If Gallaccio's works were only concerned with form, we'd be left with little more than belated footnotes to the long line of process and materially derived works by earlier artists.

Where Gallaccio's work is sparse, concise and formally acute, Georgina Starr's work is copious, confusing and hectic. There's an overwhelming amount of material in her installation, titled Hypnodreamdruff, in the New Art Room at London's Tate gallery.

Sidestep the weary queues for Cézanne, run past Bill Woodrow's overcooked, shopping-mall sculptures and plunge into the semi-darkness of a night-club called The Hungry Brain. A video projection on the wall flashes up Starr herself, crooning away as the night-club chanteuse, while the "Four Marys" from Bunty go through a Lycra-clad Pan's People routine. The club audience, filmed in an earlier incarnation of the installation at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, chat, curse and mill about.

The New Art Room is not big, but in Starr's installation it also contains the kitchen-diner of three ill-suited housemates, the bedroom of a young woman obsessed with the musical Grease, and a full-sized caravan occupied by a bloke called Dave. You can sit in Dave's caravan and watch him going about his solitary life via a video projected on the van's back window.

Watch Dave hoovering in his underpants. Watch Dave get dressed. Watch him drinking alone and preparing spaghetti. Dave, it turns out, works in a dry-cleaner's, but does magic tricks in his spare time. We get to know rather too much about Dave.

This part of Starr's work is compelling and excruciating. But it is but a fragment of Starr's meta-fiction, a sprawling overload of dream-sections, improvised, *verité* conversations between the purported occupants of the shared household, and a video of Starr playing all the parts in a scene from Grease, a musical she acted in as a teenager. Add to all this a spoof device for recording dreams and the themes of magic, madness, telepathy and hypnosis, and we, Starr's real-life audience, reel out in a state of discombobulation.

Starr's work is solipsistic, self-referential and the product of a generation that grew up with its face pressed to the TV screen, while Gallaccio uses language games derived from the high-points of modernism, transmuted into lightly associative materials. Gallaccio, with her formal astringency, and Starr, with her mélange of techniques and guises and her maddening use of narrative, are both concerned with the deeper plots of their private lives, with human relationships, with what is shared and what is lost



Australian chutzpah that travels well

THEATRE
Michael Billington

WE SEE far too little Australian drama in Britain. But Patrick Sandford at the Nuffield Southampton has had the wit to import David Williamson's controversial comedy, Dead White Males, which stirred things up in Sydney last year with its attack on fashionable literary theory and the wilder excesses of the thought police. Even though the play does not always fight fair, you have to admire Williamson's bravery and chutzpah.

His heroine, Angela Judd, is an English literature student who falls under the spell of a modish professor, Grant Swain, who uses all the right buzzwords. All literature is ideological, the patriarchal corporate state is the enemy and liberal humanism is its deadly handmaiden.

But when Angela, who communes nightly with the outraged ghost of Shakespeare, does a research project into her own family, she discovers that human beings are full of uncategorisable contradictions; that her chauvinist grandad was capable of unacknowledged altruism and that her passionately feminist mother both relished her career and felt pangs of guilt at the neglect of her daughter.

Williamson hits some of his targets dead centre. Swain is a wonderful creation; a smug academic who espouses post-structuralism and feminist multi-culturalism but who indoctrinates rather than educates his students and abuses his power by sleeping with them. He even makes "Have you read Foucault?" sound like a suave chat-up line and uses the Lacanesque literary term, "jouissance", as a sexual turn-on.

It is no mean feat to make a popular comedy out of academic debate. Williamson even puts the process of teaching on to the stage.

His main weakness is in appropriating Shakespeare as an apostle of liberal humanism and the doctrine of the unchanging human heart, even giving us scenes from As You Like It and King Lear to back up the point. But Williamson offers us a drastically simplified Will, failing to acknowledge both his moral questioning and his multi-dimensionality.

But you do not have to agree with Williamson to find his play stimulating. At least he tackles head-on the whole question of academic mind-bending. And, in the family scenes, he shows there are no simple black and whites.

The grandad, nicely played by John Woodvine, may seem an old bigot to his wife and daughters but Williamson makes you aware that he was the working-class product of a wartime generation that had a hard life and that he is still capable of selfless generosity.

It's not a perfect play but addresses living issues. Sandford's production is spiritedly played by Jeremy Clyde as swinish Swain, Claire Price as intellectually awakened Angela, and Gabrielle Lloyd as her mum, who felt morally bound to tackle a world where only 3 per cent of top management are women. It's a deeply Australian play that travels well.

It's all Greek to me

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

ISLAND OF DREAMS (Channel 4) is about British women who have fallen in love with Greeks on the Ionian island of Zakynthos. The producers have already made series about expatriates in Spain and the Dordogne. I am breathless with admiration for this wheeze. Personally, I doubt if Zakynthos is worth three hours but I can see why the TV crew thought otherwise.

Suzy is intelligent, articulate and near as dammit beautiful. She had a fiancé, a house and a job in publishing. Then she took a two-week holiday in Zakynthos and met Denis Vitsos, a farmer. "He followed me continually for that two weeks . . . He asked me to stay and live with him the first week I was here. He had flowers in his back pocket for me where nobody could see them, but he would give them me when we were on our own. Of course, I fell for it. It was new to me, having men run after me with such vigour and such passion. You have to be a female to understand how incredibly . . . female they make you feel."

Female is *le mot* exactly *juste*.

In Greece it means not only desirable but, as Suzy discovered, docile. "When you've been a business person and suddenly you're a nobody because you're a woman and a foreign woman, it's very demeaning. It's funny, you can stop believing you do have an opinion if nobody listens.

"The island is very traditional. We had many a fight over the discipline he instilled into me. Rules that only applied to me, not to him. Those were the crying years . . . I didn't like it but I live with it now. I know the rules."

Over this commentary, we saw Denis picking his dog up by the collar and hauling it along, yelping. And he is very fond of his dog. Suzy said a wife comes about fourth after a man's mother, his shooting and his dog.

"If you don't love someone enough, it's difficult. Many a time, if there'd been a No 21 bus going to Lewisham, I would have been on it."

Every Greek marriage is a wooden horse. Inside is the mother-in-law. It sounds a subject for slaughter. You are surprised Sophocles didn't make a bigger thing of it.

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis. Watch out for the flower in the back pocket.



Europe's Giants Look Beyond the Past

Moscow and Bonn are feeling their way round to a new relationship, write **Fred Hiatt** and **Rick Atkinson**

WHEN the backhoe has finished carving a trench along the shoulder of Volgogradskaya Street, Russian workmen comb the earth with garden trowels and bare fingers. The soil soon yields objects hidden for more than half a century: a helmet, a black boot, ribs, a skull.

In 10 minutes, the remains of yet another German soldier killed during the battle of Stalingrad — an epic turning point of World War II — are spread across a tarpaulin. Among the bones the workmen find an aluminum dog tag, and the identification number, matched to an old army roster, quickly yields a name: Leopold Franz Heydreck, a private first class from Wehrmacht Regiment 425.

Thirty years old when he died in November 1942, Heydreck had been buried hastily with scores of fallen comrades along the unpaved main street of this southern Russian village 10 miles from Volgograd, as Stalingrad is now called. Until this year, his bones would have been shoveled into a plastic bag and stored on a warehouse shelf with 6,000 other sets of remains of Germans already found in makeshift graves around the city.

But after years of negotiations, Russia and Germany agreed last summer to consecrate a new military cemetery west of the city. There, on the open steppe above the Volga River, Heydreck and his countrymen will finally be laid to rest.

"This is really important," said Hans Schildberg, a German forensic technician working with the Russians. "We just passed the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, and this is a testament to the change in the political relationship between our two countries." As a metaphor, the agreement to bury the past by properly burying the dead is both poignant and profound. Germany and Russia are the twin giants of Europe; the fate of the continent will be determined largely by the extent to which their relationship is cordial and constructive rather than bellicose and malignant. World War II and all its baggage remain an enormous psychological burden for both countries.

It will take more than cemeteries to establish a durable equilibrium. For much of this century, the two nations have been like scorpions in a bottle, both deeply imprinted with mutual fear and what Karl Lamers, a leading German foreign policy expert, calls "an extraordinarily problematic common history." The pressure points of today's relationship — economic, psychological, cultural and historic — will affect the merger of Eastern and Western Europe into a unified whole, as well as European stability in general.

"If you look at history and geography and economic relationships over the past centuries, whatever happened in Central Europe — and the Poles know it best — was affected by Germany and Russia," said a senior Foreign Ministry official in Bonn. "If Germany and Russia were on good terms, it was bad for the rest. If they were on bad terms, it was even worse. We are aware of the weight of these two countries, these two big animals right in the middle of the pasture," he added. "And we must be very careful how we tread."

Russian soldiers in East Germany before the Wall came down. Many Russians nurse a grudge over the peremptory way in which Germany ushered out the remnants of the Red Army in 1994 PHOTO: MARTIN ARGLES

For the Germans — newly reunited but still unsure of themselves — Russia is a mother lode of natural resources and the embodiment of Germany's once and future links to the East. Diplomats in Bonn believe Germany is uniquely placed to engage a rapidly changing Russia on behalf of the West.

Yet in truth, German influence in Russia is nil when it comes to such fundamental issues as suppressing the insurrection in the secessionist region of Chechnya or cultivating a moderate successor to ailing President Boris Yeltsin. Moreover, Russian instability is a source of deep angst, a foreboding that if things go wrong in Moscow and St. Petersburg the consequences are dire for Berlin and Frankfurt.

"We in Germany have to live in a much closer and more direct relationship with Russia than the average American," said Otto von der Gablentz, Germany's ambassador to Russia until retiring in October. "But we have basically the same interest in [seizing] this unique chance of getting Russia out of a thousand years of isolation."

For Russians — shorn of their empire, quasi-democratic, deeply insecure — Germany offers a corridor to the West, as it did for Peter the Great three centuries before. It is also a cash cow: By Bonn's reckoning, since the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, Germany has provided Russia and the other former Soviet states more than $71 billion in credits, grants and other disbursements — more than all other Western nations combined.

Eight hundred German firms now have representatives in Moscow. By virtue of proximity and historic ties, each country considers the other "a kind of preferred partner," as a German official puts it. "For Russia, the most reliable partner is Germany," agreed Anatoly Dmitrakov, general director of the Volgograd Margarine Factory. "We're not buying American or Japanese equipment . . . Politics is politics, but economics is economics." The Bonn government calculates, moreover, that on a per capita basis since 1989, every German has contributed an average of $360 in various aid programs to help Russia. Each Japanese citizen, by comparison, contributed on average less than $9. For Germany, aid is both a fire wall against instability and a means of priming the pump for future business.

As the massive aid transfer suggests, the playing field is hardly level. Russia's gross national product is one-third that of united Germany, according to Maximychev. Although German officials believe billions of marks in investment are poised to flow into Russia, few German entrepreneurs are willing to gamble there heavily until such bugaboos as organized crime and erratic tax laws are brought under control.

"In 1994, German firms invested 110 million marks ($79 million) in Russia," von der Gablentz said. "That's nothing, because in the whole world we invested 56 billion marks ($40 billion). This reflects, of course, on the very bad investment security conditions in Russia." Andrei Zagorski, deputy rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, observed, "Economically, Russia and Germany have had very high expectations of each other, and even though they never really lived up to those expectations, both consider themselves natural partners."

IF EXPECTATIONS run high, so do suspicions and insecurities. Russia has been reduced to the role of supplicant — a bitter pill for a nation that five years ago boasted the largest empire on Earth. Sensitive to slights, many Russians nurse a lingering grudge over the peremptory way in which Germany ushered out the remnants of the Red Army from Berlin in August 1994.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl, insisting that Moscow's forces had remained an army of occupation in eastern Germany for nearly five decades, refused to accord them equal status with US, British and French troops, who were feted as liberators and protectors. The snub still rankles in Moscow.

"Memories of the horrors and crimes of the last war, the old wounds and insults, personal tragedies and grudges — all are very much alive in the minds of the older generation and, one way or another, influence the mind-set of young people," Igor Maximychev, a retired diplomat who chairs the European security department in the Russian Academy of Sciences, wrote recently.

These "old wounds and insults" have played out in recent times, perhaps improbably, in the world of art. Russian officials now acknowledge possession of tens of thousands of artworks and museum artifacts taken from occupied Germany after 1945. German officials say the booty is worth more than $6 billion and includes not only paintings by Vincent van Gogh, Pierre Auguste Renoir and other masters, but also 2 million books and complete municipal archives from a number of German towns.

Negotiations over ownership of the loot have stalled. Russia's legislature has blocked the return of any objects, and the dispute — laden with pride, envy and two conflicting worldviews — threatens to become a dangerous flash point.

"There's an almost atavistic feeling in Russia where national pride is concerned, [an attitude] that after the destruction of the war, now we've got what is our due from the Germans and we're going to keep it," von der Gablentz said. "This is incompatible with the type of world the Russians want to live in." But Irina Antonova, director of the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, has insisted that the art is "compensation for the unprecedented damage" wreaked by the Third Reich.

Last year, essayist Vitali Kolbasyuk enumerated the Soviet losses: "Forty-seven million people were killed or wounded, 18 million babies were not born, 3,000 cities and towns were destroyed, 427 museums were plundered, 1,670 Russian Orthodox churches were destroyed or damaged, 532 synagogues and 237 Catholic churches were ruined, 180 million books were stolen and 564,700 pieces of art disappeared."

A poll published last year by the weekly newspaper Wochenpost indicated that about one-third of Germans surveyed feel "threatened" by Russia. It is likely that a much higher percentage feels at least queasy over potential threats: plutonium smuggling from Russia's besieged nuclear weapons establishment, environmental catastrophes such as the reactor disaster at Chernobyl a decade ago, Russian mafia networks spreading westward, economic or civil strife that could send thousands if not millions of refugees tramping toward the border.

"There's a concern that goes deep in Germany that all these things in Russia are developing in ways you can't calculate any more — crime, the mafia and so forth," a top German diplomat said. "We also feel much more clearly where the danger lies in Russia than do people in the United States, where events in Russia still seem a bit remote."

Alexander Maslakov, the Germany section chief in Russia's Foreign Ministry, pondered the tricky question of Russian and German spheres of influence as he sipped his cognac after a steak dinner in a Moscow hotel. "I don't see any great competition between Germany and Russia in Central Europe," he declared. "It's hard to answer a hypothetical question because it's not a current question. Somehow we'll just have to divide it up."

Such a cavalier approach to geopolitics provokes stern disapproval from German officials. Moscow, they say, has yet to grasp that Germany is less interested in bilateral thrusts than in extending multilateral institutions — especially the European Union and NATO — to provide prosperity and security for the entire continent. Any hint of the old entente that views the lands between Russia and Germany as spoils to be carved up is about as politically incorrect as it gets in Bonn.

"THERE is the fear or specter which has formed in some parts of Europe — will this not become in the last resort a German-Russian dominated Europe?" von der Gablentz said, alluding to an anxiety felt in Paris as well as in Prague. "Quite frankly, I think this is sheer nonsense. Why? This is one of the major points of my mission [in Moscow]: to tell the Russians that Germany is no longer the isolated nation-state they used to know."

Yet the suspicion lingers in Warsaw, Vilnius and other former Eastern Bloc capitals that they occupy a proving ground for Russian-German relations in the 21st century. For now, Russian influence is ebbing rapidly as German language, money and products become ever more ubiquitous. Again, the intangibles of pride and psychology are at play in ways difficult to measure.

Russia's strategy now is to temporize, to postpone competition for spheres of influence as long as possible in order to put its economic house in order and level the playing field, said Zagorski, of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. "Building on the assumption that Russia will be a major European actor, the big question is: Will Russia be a major European problem or will it be a European partner?" he added.

"Germany has reconquered Eastern Europe on the basis of its economy," said Alexei Pushkov, a writer and political commentator. "What can Russia give Eastern Europe? Gas and oil? They are getting that anyway.

"There are cycles of domination. For the time being, there is nothing we can do," Pushkov added. "Eventually, [East Europeans] will feel there are too many Germans, too many Germans getting drunk in Prague and getting drunk in Warsaw, and they may turn to Russia. This [illegible] happen. I'm absolutely sure. [illegible] will happen later, [illegible] very we have something to deliver the same [illegible] vital."

Petra [illegible] (February 13)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY February 25 1996

Revelations at the Movies

John Crowley

IN THE BEAUTY OF THE LILIES
By John Updike
Knopf. 491pp. $25.95

THE NOVEL, since its beginnings, has generated large numbers of subgenres. The varieties have lately seemed to proliferate wildly, like varieties of snack foods on supermarket shelves, and the bright if somewhat illusory array attracts not only readers but writers tempted to try something new, to see if they can turn out a campus farce, or an alternative-history novel, or a techno-thriller, or all three in one.

The kind that has now attracted John Updike's restless talent is the one where the generations of a family experience all the currents and counter-currents of the century, which variously pass them by, destroy them, or carry them to fame and adventure, thence to disillusion and loss. Among the usual components of this popular flavor are evocative lists of pop-culture icons, walk-ons by real historical characters, and family members who recapitulate the experiences of earlier members in changed circumstances. All are present in Updike's version; so are Updike's voice and his repertoire of gesture and feeling, as distinctively his as the genre he is working in is common property.

Two themes connect the generations of the Wilmot family as they successively appear before us: One is God, the other is the movies. The story begins on a summer afternoon in 1910, in Paterson, New Jersey, as the Rev. Clarence Arthur Wilmot all at once loses his faith in God. Clarence has the courage of his unbelief: He gives up his comfortable living, reducing his family to poverty, and tries to make money selling encyclopedias to the working people of Paterson, most of whom are worse off than himself because of the long Paterson silk strike of 1913 (the one that broke the power of the Wobblies). In the darkened nickelodeons of the city he escapes his dilemma, and finds there all that he will ever know of transcendence.

Clarence Wilmot's decline in status (and subsequent sickness and early death) has various effects on his family. His wife, Stella, will forget, and remake her husband into a sort of martyr, too good for the world, but she will never be entirely able to forgive. His son Jared's natural cynicism will find fuel in his father's foolish abnegation. And his youngest son, Teddy, will never forgive God for not relenting and giving his father the slightest sign of his existence.

For Clarence and his crisis of faith, Updike employs an upholstered prose, cut from that heavy gabardine yardage that runs from, say, George Eliot to William Dean Howells: "As, with an expression of morose benignity, he sat consuming his share of pork roast and its ample vegetable accompaniment, his wife and children — except for the youngest, little, careful, tongue-tied Teddy — were exceptionally animated and conversational." Only when he drops it, in Teddy's section, do we realize (gratefully) that this orotundity will not be permanent; we have already been reminded why the manner was discarded.

The world picks up speed dangerously in the 1920s, and frightens Teddy into abnegations of his own. His greatest skill — one he will pass on to his own grandson in malignant form — is for avoidance, and it will build him a small and, as he sees it in old age, an almost perfectly satisfactory life: He has avoided all the shoals upon which others have foundered. Not only that, he has known real love (with Emily, who has a malformed foot and a careful privacy of her own because of it) and has had a job he never tires of, as a postman in a small Delaware town.

Teddy too goes to the movies, but they somewhat frighten him with their extremities of pain and urgency, even the comedies. What lifted his father from the anguish of non-being and the pointless suffering of existence only reminds Teddy of them the more intensely. But for Teddy and Emily's daughter, Essie, growing up in the '40s, movies are not an escape; real life is the movies, and life itself the imitation. For Essie, Updike adopts a swift style richer than anything that has come before, and his vivid evocations of the artificial life of the screen, appealing and vivid throughout, now come through Essie's consciousness: "She [Ginger Rogers] wore dresses that were mountains of ruffles and big snakes of ostrich feathers that came up and covered her chin and no matter how fast he was making her move and twirl on the slippery ballroom floor her eyes stayed level and calm and warm like lamps inside her head."

ESSIE, remade as Alma De Mott, will herself enter alive into that empyrean as a star. Single-minded and heroically self-regarding, she is also the only one of the Wilmots who genuinely and spontaneously believes in God: not in church or religion, but in God as the source of the universe's love and beneficence just for her. God catches up Essie's son, Clark, in the final part, and destroys him; but we never know that Clark really believes in anything.

A cliche who understands he is a cliche (the useless and insufficiently loved son of a beautiful remote mother and her succession of nonentity husbands), Clark in 1990 is in his twenties, working at a ski resort that his great-uncle Jared has made out of a played-out copper mountain in Colorado. Teddy's talent for evasion and Jared's cynicism, his own rootlessness and irreality (movies are the most real thing in his life too, but he no longer believes in them) add up in Clark to a plain zero; when a casual pickup takes him to a commune in the mountains run by a religious zealot, the leader "stepped into him like a drifter taking over an empty shack."

With prophet Jesse and his Temple we are in purlieus that seem more remote even than Paterson in 1913 from Updike's own growing-up; yet they are as sensually sharp and exact as anything in the book, a physical environment of astonishing verisimilitude, the "mummified bundles of guns smelling of the oil that kept them eternally young," the barrel of the gun assigned to Clark that "floated outward like a flexible, sensitive wand when he embraced the polished stock of silky checkered walnut."


ILLUSTRATION VINT LAWRENCE

The outcome is clear early on, and it is to be wondered what exactly we are to make of the Waco-in-an-alternative-universe that ends the book abruptly. The mechanisms of apocalyptic belief are not studied, as we never learn that Clark actually believes; Jesse, the self-taught prophet, is a sort of cliche too, with his endless askew Biblical references, his clutch of young wives, his prophecies of destruction. The whammies (as the moviemakers of Clark's generation call them) come as expected, and are a *tour de force* of narrative management, though we can sometimes glimpse the author busy at work consulting his gun digests and reference works.

The key to Updike's intent may lie in the epigraph from which the otherwise puzzling title comes: "As he died to make men holy," the "Battle-Hymn of the Republic" says, "let us die to make men free." The God that Clarence Wilmot abandoned at such cost seizes upon his great-grandson, but — very nearly too late — Clark is given the chance to die in making at least a few women and children free. The question remains what, when we awaken both from the dream of Revelation and the revelations in the darkened theater, we awaken to.

Fanfare for Black America's Common Man

Jonathan Yardley

WE ALL GOT HISTORY
The Memory Books of Amos Webber
By Nick Salvatore
Times Books. 443pp. $25

ANYONE who has ever done historical or biographical research knows that it can take wholly unexpected directions and produce results beyond the capacity of one's imagination. That certainly is what happened a decade ago to Nick Salvatore, professor of history at Cornell and biographer of Eugene V. Debs, as he was looking up material for an article on 19th-century American labor. In an archive at Harvard he found a compendious, multi-volume, handwritten journal entitled "Amos Webber Thermometer Record and Diary." It turned out to have almost nothing to do with the project at hand; instead, it led to this wonderful book.

handmade Amos Webber was a black man
But when in freedom outside Philadel-
mumes nightly with he died 88 years later
ghost of Shakespeare, etts industrial city
research project into her own had spent
family, she discovers that human man

of intelligence and acuity, deep moral conviction and unwavering self-confidence, a man who never rose above the rank of janitor at a Worcester mill, yet was a figure of consequence not merely within that city's small black enclave but within the larger community as well.

At the age of 28, while living and working in Philadelphia, Webber began keeping a regular record of temperatures and weather "that gradually grew into something more. "His was never a confessional diary," Salvatore writes, "and one will look in vain for an introspective analysis of his emotions and motives. Yet his self-confidence with his chosen form evolved over time. Less a diarist than a recorder, a chronicler, a commentator on his world, Amos Webber grew into his task . . ." Much about Webber is missing from these ledgers — his wife of more than half a century is scarcely mentioned, and the heart-breaking death of their only child is recorded with emotions in check, if barely — yet Salvatore has been able to find much in it.

"What can be said with confidence is that Amos Webber used his chronicle to develop ideas that, as a black man in white society, he had limited opportunity to explore in more public venues. At the deepest level Webber told stories in his own particular narrative style because he found great personal satisfaction in knowing that the chronicle existed. His life, and the lives of his friends and associates, counted for something in this world; and his storytelling redeemed some of the pain, and preserved some of the pleasure, of daily life."

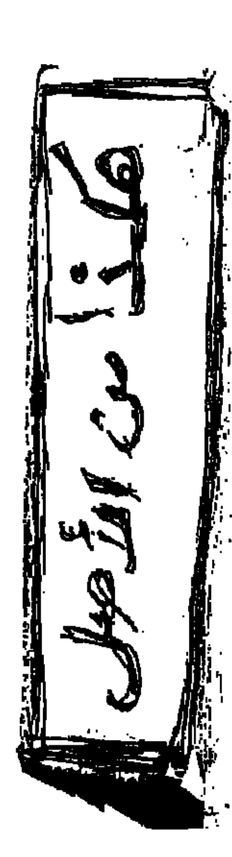
FROM an early age Webber had been imbued with a powerful moral sense; it intensified when, as a young man, he worked for a well-to-do Philadelphia white man who was similarly inclined and who encouraged Webber's moral development.

Perhaps because of his happy youthful experience in Philadelphia, Webber had a "familiarity with the white world and [an] ability to maneuver diplomatically through the racial currents of sympathetic and not so sympathetic whites," but his first allegiance beyond moral vision and patriotism was to his fellow blacks. In Philadelphia and then in Worcester, he was a leader in the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, a civic organization that helped build "the institutional framework for the expression of a distinctive black culture in the North, a culture whose synergism and diversity reflected the labyrinthine circumstances of being black, Christian and American in an environment largely hostile to [blacks'] very presence."

Yet he was no less an American than a black man. He served in the Civil War, sometimes in demeaning capacities to which white officers assigned his unit, the Fifth Massachusetts (Colored) Cavalry, but also at the capture of Petersburg. This was "a historic moment: to have partaken in the destruction of the slave system gave ultimate meaning to [black soldiers'] sacrifices and raised great hopes for the future," which is why Webber and his comrades were possessed by "an indescribable joy and fierce pride" in what they had accomplished. When the war ended Webber became active in the Grand Army of the Republic, and remained active even after whites successfully limited black membership.

Implicit in Salvatore's narrative is the assumption that Amos Webber was a remarkable man. Not merely did he have all the qualities ascribed to him above, but he had a lively interest in the world around him and entered his observations about many aspects of it in his "Thermometer Book," often couched in tart, forthright terms. Considering all the obstacles that his time and place conspired to place before him, he must be reckoned a singular man by any reasonable measure.

Yet there is another point about Amos Webber upon which Salvatore for some reason does not dwell. He may have been singular, but he was also prototypical. Because Salvatore found his papers and made such a fine book out of them and other evidence, we know more about Webber than we do about the vast majority of his fellow black Americans of his time or any other. But it is the existence of his written record rather than the facts of his life that makes Amos Webber unusual. As a black American who worked hard all his life, believed in his country even when his country did not believe in him, and lived by the right as best he understood it, he was one among millions. The real story of the African presence in America is of fidelity, forbearance and faith, which is why Amos Webber's story is also the story of many thousands gone.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY February 25 1996

Bishops depart from Vatican line on Aids

Henri Tincq

IN A report on Aids published on February 12, French bishops accept for the first time that the use of condoms is "necessary" to prevent transmission of the Aids virus. The report, called La Société En Question, was published by the Social Commission of the French episcopate.

In this official document, which, remarkably, makes no allusion to the Pope's stance on the matter, the president of the Social Commission, Monseigneur Albert Rouet, bishop of Poitiers, reports on how the episcopate's thinking on this issue has gradually shifted to the point where consensus seems to have been achieved.

While stating that condoms are "necessary" and saying how happy he is that they have "partly" made it possible to slow down the spread of Aids in France, Rouet also explains at length why the Catholic Church generally advocates a different kind of solution — fidelity in love — and contends, unlike the medical profession, for example, that prevention campaigns aimed at young people should not be based solely on the recommended use of condoms.

The drift of the bishops' message is that it is no longer reasonable for them to give the impression that a disease like Aids is purely a question of individual behaviour and private morals about which the Church has nothing to say.

"Aids is not other people's disease," the report says. "The whole social fabric is affected by it. To be able to talk about Aids one needs to take into account each individual's background and the state of society."

It was contact with patients and nursing staff that eventually convinced Rouet that the public could no longer understand the Church's stance on Aids prevention. The three latest documents published by the Social Commission — on unemployment (1993), housing (1995) and now Aids — are symptomatic of a change in the episcopate's methods.

The very structure of La Société En Question, which comprises first-hand accounts by experts, Aids sufferers, relatives, nursing staff and even a homosexual (for the first time in any official text put out by the Catholic Church), demonstrates that, far from distancing themselves from a scourge still described in some reaches of the Church as retribution for "deviant behaviour" or even "God's punishment", Christians as a whole often play an active role wherever the disease is present or debated.

Whether that role is active enough is another matter. It is a pity that the report's succession of first-hand accounts seems to have provided the bishops with an excuse not to pronounce more generally on the spiritual experience of believers who come into contact with Aids sufferers, on the low degree of mobilisation found in Christian parishes, on their failure — with a few exceptions — to take part in events like World Aids Day, on the difficulty of organising preventive campaigns in Catholic schools, and on the role of hospital chaplains (outlined in the report by a Protestant chaplain).

However the bishops' call for "fears to be exorcised" and for "everything to be done to overcome the isolation of Aids sufferers" shows they are now much more willing to commit themselves on this issue.

This has clearly set them on to a collision course with Rome. When asked about the absence of any reference in La Société En Question to Rome's thinking on Aids, Rouet said: "We wanted to focus our attention on the situation in France and assume our responsibilities as French bishops."

In other words, the use of the word "necessary" in conjunction with condoms was quite deliberate and bound to risk friction with the Vatican only a few months before the Pope's visit to France.

As soon as news of the report's contents was revealed earlier this month, the episcopate's secretariate received a "horrified" telephone call from the apostolic nuncio's office in the Vatican.

ALTHOUGH there was no immediate official reaction from Rome, there can be little doubt that influential figures in the Vatican will start doing some discreet arm-twisting.

Two of their most conservative members enjoy a virtual monopoly when it comes to propounding the Vatican's thinking on natural contraceptive methods and on Aids. They are Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, the Colombian president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, a man who has enjoyed the Pope's particular trust ever since he brought the Latin-American bishops to heel, and Cardinal Fiorenzo Angelini, who is in charge of health matters in the Vatican, and who is known for having had political and financial ties with leading Italian Christian Democrats.

The bishops who sit on the French episcopate's Social Commission are familiar with the realities of everyday life. They know the Church cannot go on issuing cut-and-dried declarations or deal with such a complex issue as Aids in a prescriptive way.

They were unhappy about last year's criticism of the episcopate as a "silent" body made up of "submissive and fearful officials" and about the constant talk of a widening rift between the Church and society.

All the signs are that they decided to risk upsetting their Roman overlords on an issue as tragic as Aids. These bishops are certainly not rebels, but they may have felt it was time to send a clear message to their Church.

(February 13 and 14)



'And now, dear listeners, here is an original idea for a St Valentine's present'

Pope 'suffers from major mental block'

The French scientist who discovered the Aids virus talks to **Jean-Yves Nau**

PROFESSOR Luc Montagnier, the man who discovered the Aids virus, regards the shift in the French bishops' attitude towards the use of condoms in the fight against Aids as an "important development". Their report, he says, "agrees with the conclusions of many doctors and scientists, namely that the condom is a mechanical way of preventing infection, but that it is not the only one.

"But this does not mark a complete U-turn. It is to be noted that it is not the bishops themselves who state that condoms are 'necessary' as a preventive method, but that they quote — approvingly — the view of 'competent doctors' and the action of public health authorities.

"The bishops' report has the merit of tackling the problem very frankly instead of, as in the past, discussing or alluding to it indirectly. In this sense, it's a very positive step."

Montagnier believes that the great majority of doctors have never advocated condoms as a panacea, contrary to exaggerated claims made by some members of the Catholic hierarchy.

"We've never said condoms were the only means of protection against infection by the Aids virus. On the other hand, we have always stressed that this method should not be ruled out on religious grounds."

Because he was deeply concerned by the negative attitude of the religious authorities, Montagnier has been to the Vatican on several occasions.

"I was surprised, in November 1993, to have been very warmly applauded for a talk I gave there on the subject," he remembers. "I subsequently learnt that the audience consisted of representatives of religious congregations working on the ground. I then realised the applause meant that I had said out loud what many of them thought themselves but could not express."

How does Montagnier explain the longstanding discrepancy between the Catholic rank and file and the official line of the Church? "Those who make up the Pope's immediate circle, and indeed the Pope himself, suffer from a major mental block. The Pope belongs to another generation and was trained in Poland, a country where the Church has remained extremely traditionalist.

"It has to be remembered that the Vatican's condemnation of condoms was issued as part of its rejection of contraception. I tried to win support for my arguments, but I was unsuccessful because of the influence of the Pope's entourage. I don't think the Pope is going to change his mind. But the fact that he allows dignitaries of the Catholic Church to put forward a different point of view marks a step forward.

"Above all, now that the French have shown the way, bishops in Africa and Latin America, the regions of the world worst affected by the epidemic, ought to meet very soon and agree to deliver the same message. It's vital."

(February 13)

Pressure builds on Samper to stand down

Anne Proenza in Bogotá

INVESTIGATIONS into Colombian president Ernesto Samper's personal involvement in the alleged financing of his 1994 election campaign with drug money were officially reopened on February 14, when the prosecutor-general, Alfonso Valdivieso, gave evidence before a meeting held in camera of a special committee of the Congress, which is the only body empowered to judge the president.

Escorted by dozens of bodyguards and assailed by a pack of reporters who had been waiting for him for several days, Valdivieso handed over his voluminous evidence, which consisted of more than 50 folders and two video cassettes.

The president had managed to fend off the charges against him on December 15. But the new evidence, contributed by Valdivieso, convinced the congressional committee of the need to restart investigations. Leaks published by all Colombia's newspapers suggested there are grounds for charging the president with four offences: electoral fraud, personal enrichment, forgery and the concealment of evidence.

The congressional committee will hand down its verdict within the next four months. The Congress will then decide whether to press formal charges against President Samper.

If it goes ahead, the president will be temporarily relieved of his office. Then it will be up to the Senate to determine his fate.

If the senators feel that the president is liable to criminal charges, they will pass the case on to the Supreme Court of Justice. Experts believe the whole process could take from six to eight months — a long period of time given the unrest now gripping Colombia.

Hardly a day goes by without some new revelations about the scandal being revealed by the media.

On February 14 the Liberal senator, Gustavo Espinosa, was remanded in custody on charges of illegal personal enrichment in the same way as the president. He is the fourth sitting member of parliament to have been jailed. Other prisoners include the former defence minister Fernando Botero, the former treasurer of Samper's election campaign, Santiago Medina, and one of the president's advisers, Juan Manuel Abella.

Three ministers — the interior minister Horacio Serpa, the foreign minister Rodrigo Pardo, and the communications minister Juan Manuel Turbay — all of whom played a major role in Samper's election campaign, are expected to find themselves facing a similar plight within the next few days.

This week the electoral council also formally called into question the campaigns of the two candidates at the 1994 presidential election. Spending on President Samper's campaign is believed to have exceeded by $2 million the $4 million maximum amount authorised, while the campaign of the Conservative candidate, Andres Pastrana, allegedly overstepped the mark by more than $1 million.

In the past few days an increasingly weary-looking Samper has consistently proclaimed his innocence. Meanwhile the political climate has been steadily deteriorating and the country is facing its biggest crisis for 35 years.

On February 12, in the course of outlining the results of his anti-drugs policy to an audience of army officers, ministers and reporters, the president made a point of reviving painful memories of the years of drugs-related terrorism by projecting on to a large screen pictures of the bomb attacks that caused such terrible bloodshed in Colombia during the eighties.

But those days are not entirely a thing of the past. On February 14, guerrillas massacred 11 peasants, including one woman, in the north of the country. The victims were "picked out" by a group of 12 guerrillas who had boarded a bus taking workers to the Osaka banana plantation, 10 km from Carepa, in the Uraba region. In 1995 more than 700 people were killed in that region, where five similar massacres took place.

(February 16)

Screen tales from Sandinista country

The British film director Ken Loach is making a film in Nicaragua. **Pascal Mérigeau** reports from the set

"ALWAYS red and black," reads the inscription on a grave dug by the side of the Pan-American highway, north of Estelí, about two hours' drive from the capital, Managua. The spirit of the Sandinistas is evidently still alive in Nicaragua.

The area was one of the centres of the revolution of 1978-79, which has left many a scar on both the walls of houses and people's minds. That is why Ken Loach chose it as a location for the film he is currently shooting, Carla's Song.

A mud track and a bridge provide access to the village of Duacale Grande, which was hit by a cholera epidemic last summer. British film technicians rebuilt the bridge, which had been swept away by floods. But they also built houses which they later planned — to the bemusement of the villagers — to blow up.

The whole population of Duacale Grande, including children and old people, gathered at a respectable distance from the main square, holding their hands over their ears to lessen the sound of the explosions.

This scene of destruction took them back nine years to the time when the fledgling Nicaraguan democracy was under attack from the Contras. The fact that the Contras' arms and military strategy had been provided by the United States was the first thing that struck Loach when he read the screenplay by Paul Laverty, a young Scots lawyer who had visited Nicaragua with the idea of helping to nurture what shreds of human rights had survived there.

The film, which is set in 1987, tells how a Glasgow bus-driver called George (played by Robert Carlyle, whom Loach used in his 1991 movie, Riff Raff) makes the acquaintance of Carla (Oyanka Cabezas, a Managua dancer), a young woman whose odd behaviour is the result of traumatic experiences in Nicaragua. George was planning to marry, but decides instead to accompany Carla back to her country and help her try to find the man she loves.



Oyanka Cabezas and Robert Carlyle, who play the central characters in Loach's film, Carla's Song, on location in Nicaragua PHOTOGRAPH: BRENNAN LINSLEY

It took five years for Laverty to write his screenplay, and another three for Loach and his producer Sally Hibbin to get the project off the ground. Loach visited Nicaragua for the first time just before making Ladybird, Ladybird (1994). Since then, he has made Land And Freedom, which is set during the Spanish Civil War.

Many members of the crew on that film are now in Nicaragua working on Carla's Song. They come from 14 different countries. Loach started filming in Glasgow in November before moving on to location in Nicaragua — as usual, he decided to shoot the sequences of the film in chronological order.

Despite the problems that cropped up every day, mostly the result of inadequate infrastructure and means of communication (telephones do not lie thick on the ground in Nicaragua), Loach always seemed relaxed. It was as if he had decided to try to make the most of the inevitable snags and delays.

But appearances can be deceptive. In the best British stiff-upper-lip tradition, Loach, usually wearing his shirt collar buttoned up despite the heat, refused to let his irritation show through. But in one-to-one conversation he did admit that things were going much too slowly for his liking.

Yet he ensured that each take was prepared in record time. This was partly made possible by the fact that Loach's cinematographer, Barry Ackroyd, who has worked on many of his films, used practically no artificial lighting. The duration of the shots was often very long, but Loach almost never asked for more than two takes. His feeling is that "beyond that, the actors lose their spontaneity".

He did everything in his power to put them at ease — hence the lack of spotlights, the long takes, and the requirement that all those who absolutely needed to be on set should keep a low profile.

Scott Glenn (best known for his performance in Philip Kaufman's The Right Stuff) had flown down from the United States to play the part of Bradley, a former CIA agent who is so shocked by the atrocities he has been involved in that he joins the ranks of the Sandinistas.

Glenn said that when he decided to become an actor he dreamt of working with a director like Loach. "As the years went by I eventually assumed that no such director existed," he said with a smile. "Some time ago my daughter insisted I go see a movie she described as extraordinary. That's how I came to discover Ladybird, Ladybird and Crissy Rock, a truly unbelievable actress. I asked the guy at the video club to let me have all of Ken Loach's movies. He'd obviously never heard of him, but still I managed to track down Riff Raff.

"A few days later, when my agent told me Loach was offering me a part in a movie I thought he was kidding. Proof that Loach really is a unique person is that I've managed to speak Spanish, whereas I used not to understand a single word."

This meant that Glenn was not only able to chat with the villagers but improvise one or two lines of dialogue in Spanish with the Sandinistas as they examine the corpses of Contras killed during the attack on the village.

One of the actors playing a Sandinista violently kicked a dead man's legs apart. Loach had not planned to have him do that, but now it was in the can. He said: "It's horrible, but I actually think that must have been the way things happened."

True to their trusted method, Loach and his crew relied on local people — in this case the communal committees of villages in the region — to come up with actors to play minor parts. That was how Rosa Amalia Lopez came to play Carla's mother. On many occasions she had herself experienced the same scenes she was required to perform in front of the camera. It was strange for her to plunge back into those tragic times, which she remembers as being remarkable chiefly for the way they generated solidarity between ordinary people. Before the revolution, her house in Estelí had been used as a meeting place by the Sandinistas.

Lopez went on to join the army and saw active service in the north. "The spirit of the time is still alive," she said with a rather sad smile. "I'd like the film to help people find out what really happened in Nicaragua and allow them to regain their sense of solidarity. I hope they'll be able to see it before the presidential elections next October, but there's no guarantee the government will allow its release."

The Nicaraguan government authorised the shooting of Carla's Song, without even asking to see the screenplay, after Land And Freedom had been shown as part of an event devoted to European culture.

Rosita Savala, who plays a nurse in the film, was 15 in 1974 when she left the Catholic associations to which she belonged and joined the Sandinistas. After the "triumph" in 1979, she became a liaison agent whose task was to deliver messages and infiltrate the enemy ranks.

After being re-elected three times as head of her communal committee, she continued to exercise what she jokingly called her "dictatorship" and was actively preparing for the elections.

"Unemployment is running at 70 per cent," she said. "The big landowners who had taken refuge abroad are in the process of buying up land confiscated from them. And they're getting it for peanuts because people are completely destitute and have no choice but to sell.

"Otherwise the landowners simply get their land returned to them with the help of corrupt magistrates. There's no health system any more. Medical supplies have run out. This country's only hope is the Sandinista movement." Those who had been discreetly listening to her gradually approached and voiced their agreement. They were, they said, both weary and hopeful.

Loach said he had met a lot of women like Rosita and Rosa Amalia in Nicaragua, just as he had in Ireland and in Spain: "They are the core of revolutionary movements, and they inject extraordinary energy and faith into them." Carla's Song, due to be released in France next autumn, will certainly be a militant film — a film in red and black.

(February 3)

The importance of being Russian

Sandro Cappelletto meets rising star Valery Gergiev, conductor and director of St Petersburg's Kirov Theatre

VALERY GERGIEV hammered his message home: "'It's a question of now or never,' I told Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. 'Either you do something straight away and you really do it, or you can say goodbye to this theatre. There's no time to be lost.' But I wonder if what I said really sank in."

Gergiev, a 43-year-old with characteristically Caucasian features (he hails from Ossetia), has been running the Kirov Theatre in St Petersburg since 1988. The theatre, like the Bolshoi in Moscow, is one of the great monuments of Russian musical life.

He is currently conducting a production of an early opera by Prokofiev, The Gambler, at La Scala in Milan and at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris. But he spends three quarters of his time at the Kirov. The degeneration of cultural life in Russia is something he finds deeply depressing. "I often ask myself: why did I stay in Russia? Gorbachev opened the doors and everyone did a bunk. In the past five years we've lost centuries of tradition. A nation that once had extraordinary musical assets is becoming impoverished."

Gergiev is scathingly critical of politicians' lack of interest in music. "They stand there with a smile on their faces. They only come so they're in the official photo on the night of the première. There's no way of getting to talk to them — and anyway they're always playing musical chairs. That doesn't really matter — the wealth of Russia is my theatre, and not this or that minister. The new breed of political animal in Russia, as anywhere else, is only interested in culture as an instrument of power."

Gergiev has fond, if slightly dimmed, memories of the time when Russia was united in its love of music. "I'll never forget the first recital Rostropovich gave after returning home after so many years. I was too young to remember the occasion when Khrushchev invited Stravinsky back to celebrate his 80th birthday in 1962. But I certainly celebrated Slava's return!

"Then everything disintegrated at unbelievable speed. Nowadays, when someone like Rostropovich wants to put on a production of Mussorgsky's Khovanshchina at the Bolshoi he has to call on the services of our St Petersburg singers, because there aren't any left in Moscow. Our young singers learn their skills at our music schools with the help of our teachers, then an agent turns up and gets them to sign a contract. Then they vanish without trace. The man who decides on the future of Russian singers is an American agent. It's scarcely believable.

"Musicians I once trained now perform all over the world, from San Francisco to Tokyo — people like Gorgashkova, Borodina, Grigorian and Galusin. I create stars and they're snatched from me," Gergiev adds angrily.

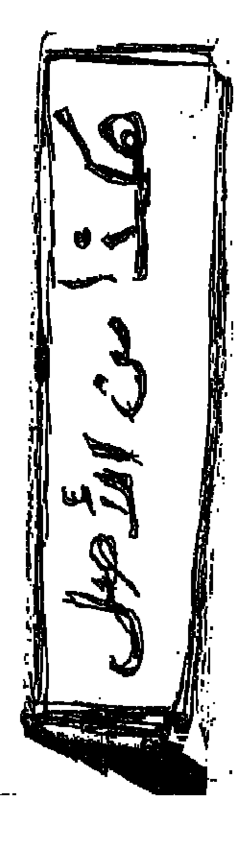
"St Petersburg was a European city in the 18th century," he says. "Italian music was performed there. In the 19th century, Berlioz and Wagner visited the place. Verdi went there for the première of La Forza Del Destino, then it was Richard Strauss's turn. I want to revive that international tradition, and naturally, at the same time, stick up for our national repertoire."

Meanwhile in St Petersburg, labour and equipment costs are rising while the Kirov's budget has been trimmed. Gergiev has had to increase ticket prices. "But if I raise them any more, it won't be the Russian people, those true music-lovers, who will be turning up at the theatre, but *nouveaux riches* who neither know nor understand anything."

So why hasn't he left? Gergiev gives a simple reply: "Because I'm Russian."

(February 2)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani



False dawn for the British economy

Will Hutton

LAST week saw some remarkable statistics. UK unemployment in January fell to its lowest for five years, but meanwhile underlying inflation dropped below 3 per cent. Even the Bank of England acknowledged that the Government is a little more likely than not to hit its 2.5 per cent target for underlying inflation in the next two years. Britain's chronic tendency to inflation seems to be evaporating.

There is a new spring in ministerial steps, despite the Scott report. Conservatism is obviously working; and a further interest rate cut cannot be far away. Those 15 years of labour market reforms, weakening trade unions and reducing protection to employees have made workers less hawkish in wage claims.

The pre-emptive interest rate rises 18 months ago by the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, showed a determination on the issue of inflation that is now paying off. And ministers' loyalty to free trade and the global market has produced tough competition that offers a cap to inflation. Happy days! Maybe the next election is winnable, after all.

That's one prism through which to look at the world, but a closer inspection behind the figures unmasks a less Panglossian interpretation.

Labour-market flexibility, globalisation and pre-emptive disinflation are part of a wider story in which, put simply, capital has become very powerful in relation to labour. The share of profits in national income has risen sharply while the share accruing to wages has fallen to its lowest level for 40 years. Behind the fashionable buzz-words stand old-fashioned power relations — bringing insecurity, instability and inequality in their wake.

For, as last week's Bank of England Inflation Report highlights, the fall in unemployment has not implied a rise in full-time employment or even a fall in economic inactivity — the definition encompassing those (mainly men) who have counted themselves out of the labour market, living on incapacity benefit, savings or early retirement income. Instead, there has been a significant rise in part-time work. People have been moving from unemployment into a world of insecure, part-time jobs, a category which now constitutes 30 per cent of the labour market.

Nor is this well-paid work. John Hughes of the Trade Union Research Unit at Oxford's Ruskin College has looked at the evidence in the 1995 New Earnings Survey, which shows that half Britain's part-timers earn less than £4.40 ($6.80) an hour. Britain's employers, in short, have over the past four years been hiring cheap part-timers whom they can sack if times get hard. They have largely refused to increase investment, which is still falling as a proportion of gross domestic product. What's worse for those in the bottom 10 per cent is that hourly wage-rates are lower in 1995 than they were in 1994.

Hours worked

Full-time and part-time employees, 1993 as base year

In other words, the lack of wage pressure reflects the new structure of the labour market; and that in turn indicates the new capacity and desire of employers to hire low paid, part-time and temporary workers.

Ministers like to say this is a vital competitive advantage for Britain, but this is unwarranted by evidence. First, multinationals in Britain, as the OECD reported in 1994, offer more full-time, high-wage jobs than do indigenous British employers. Second, the whole argument about globalisation is hugely overstated, as Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson argue in their new book, Globalisation In Question. Hirst and Thompson show that multinationals still have the vast bulk of their activity in their home region. Moreover, the trend between 1987 and 1992/3 was to deglobalise, concentrating more rather than less of their activity close to home.

Nor do Hirst and Thompson detect a vast flood of investment into low-wage, less developed countries. Indeed they argue that mass production of all but very simple low-tech goods is very risky outside the infrastructure offered by developed countries, a view shared by the multinationals. They tend to invest in a few developing countries where economic success is proven but largely reliant on shifting labour from low value-added agriculture to high value-added industry, and this cannot take place more than once.

The story of a vast pool of cheap Asian labour hanging like the sword of Damocles over wage levels in the West is unjustified: there is too little investment in these countries by multinationals or competition from them to explain trends in the British labour market. In any case, the vast bulk of trade and investment flow is between Europe, Japan and North America — with similar wage levels. The main impact on the labour market is the perceived threat of multinationals and large domestic companies moving production to low-cost countries. But most would rather retain the threat than deliver on it, and it is the threat, some allege, that is helping reduce wage pressure.

This seems far-fetched as an explanation of the changes in employment and wage patterns across the economy. Something more profound is going on — and a glance at the business pages shows what it is.

United Kingdom plc is in the throes of a wave of takeovers and mergers that makes the 1980s look tame. Over the past week or so, Rentokil has bid for the giant conglomerate BET; Granada, fresh from its takeover of Trust House Forte, has built up its stake in Yorkshire TV; MAI and United Newspapers have announced a £3 billion merger and a counter-bid is expected; Farnell Electronics has defied two leading shareholders to pay £1.85 billion for the US-based Premier Industrial Corporation. Bids and deals are now running close to £300 billion a year. It is staggering.

More ominously still, there are growing signs that the major pension funds and insurance companies are in cahoots with predator companies to launch these bids and deals, offering as they do high share prices and good short-term performance for institutional investors.

Andrew Dickerson, Heather Gibson and Euclid Tsakalotos from the University of Kent have sent me an intriguing study of how a capital market of uncommitted shareholders interacts with managers frightened of a takeover to produce an economy which is characterised by low investment, high dividend payout ratios and frequent takeovers.

The best equilibrium is obviously a high investment/low dividend strategy for all, but once one company goes for a high dividend/low investment strategy, every other company is forced to follow suit if it wants to retain its independence.

This is what is happening today. Companies are hiring low-paid workers and under-investing to boost short-term profits — all want to be predators rather than victims. Even long-termist, decent investment institutions, such as Standard Life, insisting on proper standards of corporate governance, are helpless before the avalanche of boardroom ego-mania and greed.

But this is just another expression of contemporary power relations. We are living through a great empowerment of capital in a very particular financial system and misunderstanding the byproducts. Low wages do not presage a new Nirvana or an efficient labour market; they are the result of a system malfunction that inexorably generates low investment and low growth. Watch as the drama plays itself out, because it will end in tears.

In Brief

LORD WAKEHAM, a former UK minister, is to mediate between debt-laden Eurotunnel and its 225 banks. Negotiations for a $12.4 billion refinancing package are deadlocked.

REUTERS, the media and information group, maintained a 10-year record of profit growth, posting $928 million for 1995.

LLOYDS TSB, the newly merged UK bank, announced $2.6 billion pre-tax profit amid union warnings that it was seeking 650 branch closures involving 10,000 job losses.

THORN EMI is to become the latest British group to "de-merge" by splitting into an EMI-led music business and an electrical retailing operation.

FORD car workers in Britain have voted not to strike over a package to raise pay by 9.25 per cent over two years but do nothing to cut the working week.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates February 10	Sterling rates February 12
Australia	2.0450-2.0491	2.0270-2.0311
Austria	15.68-15.71	15.83-15.86
Belgium	45.88-45.98	46.30-46.41
Canada	2.1398-2.1428	2.0997-2.1027
Denmark	8.62-8.65	8.70-8.72
France	7.69-7.70	7.74-7.75
Germany	2.2322-2.2363	2.2527-2.2558
Hong Kong	11.94-11.95	11.82-11.83
Ireland	0.9691-0.9716	0.9712-0.9738
Italy	2,446-2,449	2,404-2,408
Japan	160.64-160.91	163.17-163.44
Netherlands	2.4988-2.5021	2.5224-2.5256
New Zealand	2.2684-2.2715	2.2711-2.2738
Norway	9.76-9.78	9.83-9.84
Portugal	232.73-233.37	233.76-234.39
Spain	188.36-188.65	189.61-189.90
Sweden	10.63-10.65	10.62-10.64
Switzerland	1.8169-1.8197	1.8383-1.8411
USA	1.5450-1.5460	1.5304-1.5314
ECU	1.2190-1.2205	1.2272-1.2284

FTSE100 Share Index up 17.7 at 3744.3. FTSE 250 Index down 37.6 at 4190.0. Gold up $0.25 at $406.50.

CLASSIFIED

Students on the brink

Universities in Europe face severe cuts as education budgets are slashed to meet Maastricht targets. **Harriet Swain** assesses the campus prospects

THEY have been marching in Paris, demonstrating in Bonn, holding sit-ins in Rome. After years of burying their heads in books, students across Europe are beginning to make tentative complaints about their lot.

In Germany and France they can queue for hours to find seats in a lecture hall. In Britain and the Netherlands, grants barely cover the cost of basic food and accommodation, and young people are receiving more of their financing through loans, which must be repaid once they find the jobs that are increasingly hard to secure.

Scenes of Parisian students marching down the Boulevard Saint-Germain last November evoked memories of the demonstrations in 1968. But this time the theme uniting young people across the European Union is not ideological but practical. The common fear is unemployment; the common demand is for an education to keep them ahead in the European jobs market and for the money to pay for it.

The trouble is there is less public money around. Budgets across Europe are becoming tighter as governments struggle to meet the criteria for European monetary union.

In Germany, a budget deficit of DM 6 billion ($4 billion) has squeezed every part of public-sector spending, including higher education. Berlin alone is being forced to reduce funded student places by 15,000 within 10 years, while the number of actual students will stay roughly the same.

Nearly two bodies occupy every student seat in the average German university. Thirty years ago, university heads and politicians agreed to accept swollen student numbers temporarily, expecting them to have fallen back by this time because of fewer 18-year-olds.

Instead, with more than a third of young people now wanting to go to university the situation is worse than ever.

Increasingly, intake on courses is being restricted, something which goes directly against the German principle of higher education being open to everyone who passes their school leaving diploma (Abitur).

Recent money-spinning ideas have included charging wealthier students tuition fees and demanding interest on loans. Both have sparked protests from young people, who late last year staged demonstrations in Bonn.

Meanwhile, in France, the number of students entering higher education has risen by 83 per cent over the past 20 years and government policy is to increase it still further.

Efforts to meet Maastricht criteria have left little public cash to pay for this expansion. Universities say they need millions to pay off existing debts, let alone employ extra staff. Students are also demanding the kind of personalised contact with lecturers experienced by their counterparts in England, feeling it will prepare them better for work.

November's student strike started when Rouen students demanded more money to pay for 188 new teaching posts at their university.

In the Netherlands, overcrowding is less of a problem but, unlike the French, the Dutch government is determined to reduce student numbers. Ministers hope to see the number of young people entering higher education drop from 185,000 to 40,000 by 2004 and are looking for cuts amounting to 200 million guilders ($120 million).

Twenty years ago, the Dutch government's policy was to allow everyone the chance to go to university. Now it claims there are no longer enough jobs for graduates, and young people should be encouraged to develop technical skills instead.

Opponents say it is simply a way of saving money. But it is not the only savings scheme. All students at Dutch universities now receive a grant of about 470 guilders ($285) per month if they live away from home, plus a loan. From September all grants will become loans that must be repaid, unless the student achieves a high enough exam grade at the end of the year.

Conditions vary considerably in Italy, from the packed lecture halls of Rome's La Sapienza university — with more than 150,000 undergraduates in an institution originally designed for 30,000 — to the relative quiet of Ferrara.

Education ministers have tried to solve financial problems by encouraging more private investment, although this has proved controversial with students. Sit-ins have become a common part of university life, with protests over staff shortages, understocked libraries and over-full lecture halls.

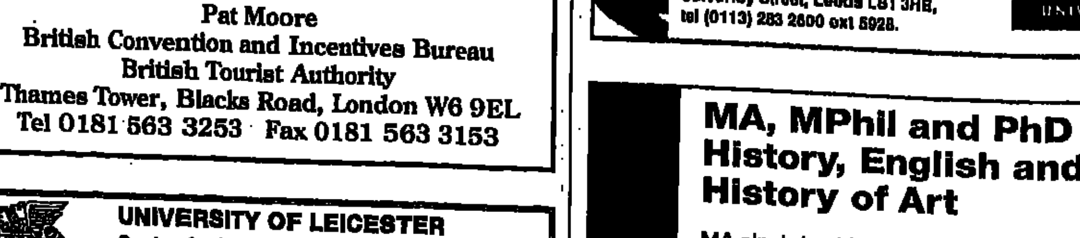
Problems in individual countries can no longer be treated in isolation as a period of study abroad increasingly becomes a must for EU students. Overcrowding in French universities handicaps foreign undergraduates studying there as much as French students. Pressure on courses such as medicine in the Netherlands means that Dutch medics are being sent for training to other European countries.

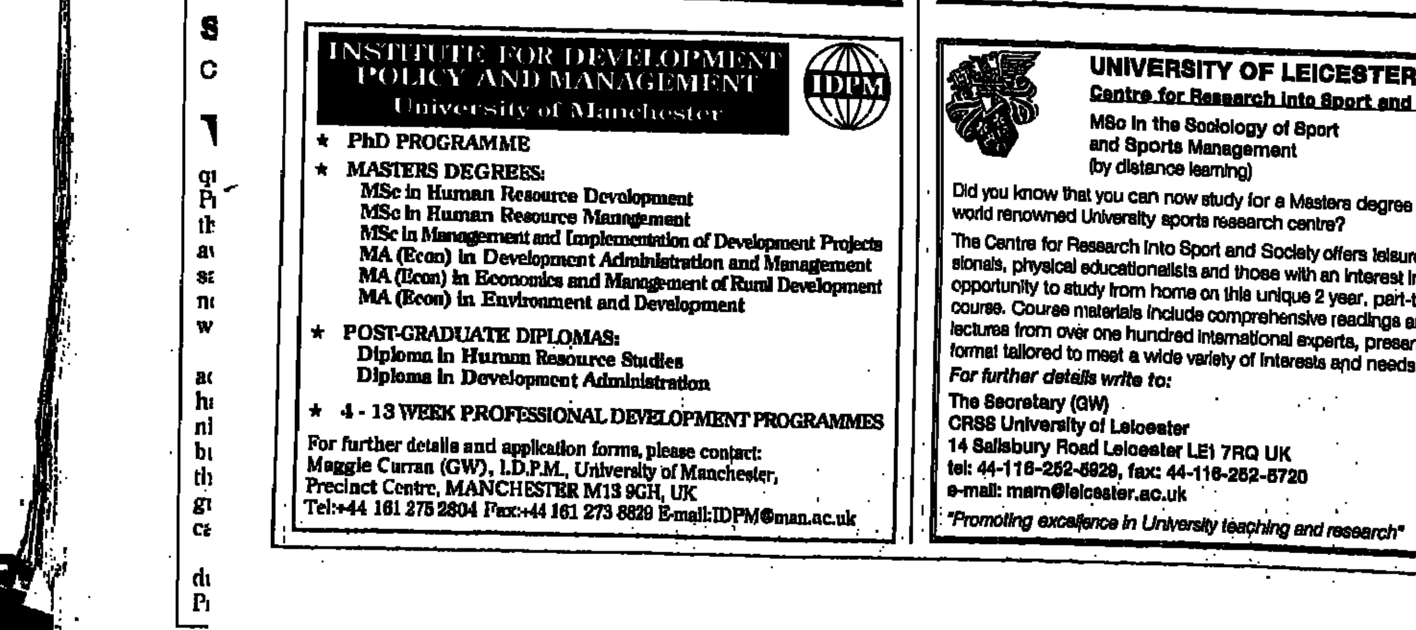
Governments are torn between the need to meet financial criteria for inclusion in monetary union and their desire to produce an educated workforce able to compete once they get there. Their proposed solutions vary, but most hit students, either financially or in their studying conditions.

European education specialist Professor Claudius Gellert, professor of education at Reading University, said he was surprised that students were not making more fuss under the appalling circumstances faced by some. German student Nicolai Andler was more pragmatic. He said most young people were so worried about working to secure their own futures that they had little time left for protesting.



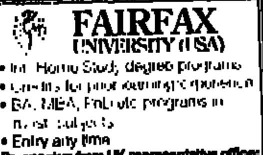
Uncertain future . . . fear of unemployment has led students in Paris and across Europe to take to the streets PHOTO: ASHLEY ASHWOOD















University	Post	Ref. No.
AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN		
Botswana	P/AP Primary Education	W44731
Botswana	L Law	W44735
Botswana	Coordinator for Development of Nursing	W44742
Botswana	P Home Economics Education	W44750
Botswana	AP Mathematics Education	W44751
Botswana	L Physics Education	W44752
West Indies (Jamaica)	L/AL French	W44744
West Indies (Jamaica)	L Television/Video Production	W44745
West Indies (Trinidad)	P/SL Prosthodontics	W44736
West Indies (Trinidad)	SL/L Accounting	W44737
West Indies (Trinidad)	P Human Anatomy	W44738
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Abbreviations: D - Director; AD - Assistant Director; P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer; AL - Assistant Lecturer.



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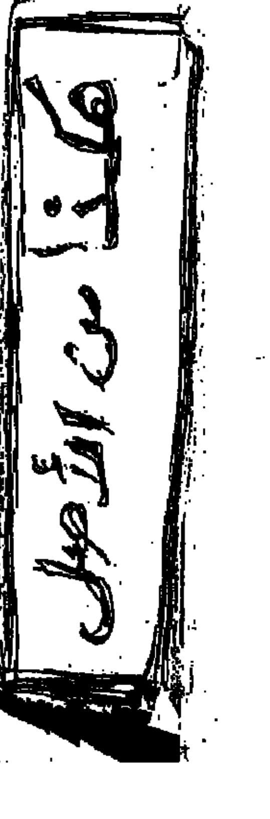
Hazel Swaine, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford, BD7 1DP. Tel: 01274 384171; Fax: 01274 385240; Email: h.l.fotherston@bradford.ac.uk

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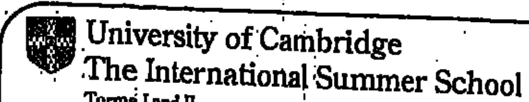
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Further particulars including details of the application procedure should be obtained from

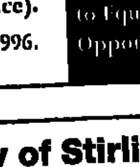
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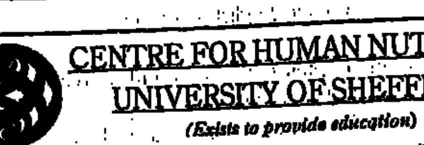
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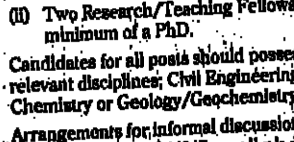
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Susan Parry and Elizabeth Connell get to grips with the most problematic of Wagner's masterpieces PHOTOGRAPH: TRISTRAM KENTON

Masterful Tristan

Andrew Clements salutes David Alden's brilliant staging of Wagner's Tristan And Isolde at the Coliseum

THE ENGLISH National Opera's new staging of Tristan And Isolde is the finest, most serious and considered piece of opera-making to come out of London's Coliseum in the past three years. The partnership of director David Alden and conductor Mark Elder produced some of the most striking productions of the Powerhouse years in the eighties and now, brought together again by the new regime, they have come up with a reading of the most dramatically problematic of all Wagner's masterpieces that answers almost every question that could be asked of it.

The linchpin of the success is Elder's account of the score; he sets the standard for the long evening with an account of the prelude that is profound, deeply eloquent and yet marvellously flexible, and goes on to pace every section with the same care and searching intelligence.

Elder's concern for the singers, the space he allows them and the dramatic shape he imposes on each act are all models of operatic communication. With such firm musical support, Elizabeth Connell's fresh, unconventional Isolde can establish herself from her very first proud, resentful lines; there may not be the massive surges of vocal power of a singer in the great Wagnerian tradition, but instead there is a care with shading, and with a precise weighting of words and phrases that delivers every detail of the text.

It's singing that often looks back to Wagner's forebears, to the world of early German opera from which he developed his language, but still makes the final *Liebestod* as touching and conclusive, if not as overwhelming as could be wished for. George Gray's shambling Tristan is much more rough and ready; his sound is not very attractive, but it is thoroughly effective.

On the stage, discipline is all; Alden's direction never wastes a gesture. Ian MacNeil's designs furnish the first two acts with a threatening, brick wall patched with stucco and a reflective metallic sheen, with just a hint of the sea in the first act when part of the wall rises to reveal a ship's wheel and a scrap of rigging. The third act, when the opera has abandoned reality, is played out on a bare stage, wonderfully lit by Wolfgang Goebbel.

This Tristan and Isolde are wrapped in their own private worlds of feeling, as if the love that is released by the elixir is much more about self-discovery than mutual devotion. They sing their climactic love duet as far apart physically as the stage will allow, and in the third act, all the protagonists move in their individual orbits around the dying Tristan, oblivious of each other.

It is a bleak, superbly realised ending, and like every detail in this production the clear result of meticulous care and thought.

Performances until March 16 (+44 171-632 8300)

French opera house reopens

AFTER 18 months of silence, the Paris Opera house is about to burst back into life after a £20 million renovation. Known as the Palais Garnier after its 19th century architect, the house reopens officially on March 1, with a concert performance of Mozart's Don Giovanni, *writes Paul Webster*.

The return of lyric performances to the 126-year-old building will overturn a Socialist government decision to separate ballet and opera, with the latter being restricted to the Bastille theatre, opened in 1989.

Its reopening has taken on a special significance after fire destroyed the Fenice opera house in Venice, the increasing concern about the safety of the Bolshoi theatre, and the closure of Covent Garden for renovation.

Apart from the installation of computer-controlled technology for stage machinery, air-conditioning and new safety techniques, interior renovation has meticulously respected Charles Garnier's original plans.

But purists who hoped that Marc Chagall's 1964 ceiling would be taken down will be disappointed. Philippe Douste-Blazy, France's culture minister, said: "It has become part of the Opera tradition."

Rallying cry from a troubadour

Jackson Browne's music comes with a political conscience. Interview by **Richard Williams**

HE WAS the golden boy of the golden age of West Coast rock, the epitome of the seventies singer-songwriter, the sensitive troubadour whose output ranged from the political to the personal, reflecting a concern for the environment and US foreign policy alongside encoded references to an eventful love-life that stretched from Nico to Daryl Hannah. Inevitably, Jackson Browne's position in today's firmament is less certain. He isn't dead, so he doesn't have the mystique of Tim Buckley or Tim Hardin. He isn't a living hero to a new generation, like Neil Young. He hasn't veered off into painting, like Joni Mitchell. On the other hand, unlike his friends Crosby, Stills and Nash, he can still turn the stirrings of creative thought into worthwhile music.

Browne, whose career began 30 years ago, comes from the fortunate generation of rock musicians who won their platinum discs and their mansions in the Hollywood Hills without needing to make any great display of ambition. The world was expanding, the audience was exploding, and success came to these musicians as a reward for doing exactly what they wanted to do. If their record company had a marketing department, they didn't need to know where to find it. Some of them are dead now, others are moribund. Browne is one of the few to remain on speaking terms with his original talent, capable every two or three years of generating a bunch of new songs that can remind his old listeners of the power of Late For The Sky, The Pretender and In The Shape Of A Heart to shed light on the realities of their own lives.

On tour, no 47-year-old exudes more of a sense of unspoilt freshness; physically and vocally he appears unchanged from the pretty, shiny-haired boy who opened for Laura Nyro at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London in 1972, alone with his guitar and the romantic songs from his debut album, a record that helped define the coming wave of West Coast rock.

His new record, Looking East, is in no sense a radical departure from its 10 predecessors. There are snatches of lite rock, snippets of So-Cal reggae, harmonies glowing like a Malibu sunset, a palette of intelligent guitar and keyboard textures, and a lot of wry boy-man intelligence in lyrics that deal with the American condition all the way from the barrio to the White House. "I suppose there are some themes running through it," he replied when I asked what had been his preoccupations at the time he wrote the songs. It's hard to encapsulate."

For all the straightforward ranting of a song called Information Wars ("In the flickering light and the comforting glow/You get the world every night as a TV show/The latest spin on the shit we're in, blow by blow/And the more you watch the less you know"), it's possible to detect a change of focus from the political to the personal, even in songs ostensibly dealing with issues rather than emotions. The battle lines no longer seem as clear in the mind of a man long active in a variety of campaigns, who once committed virtually a whole album — 1986's Lives In The Balance — to an attack on US foreign policy in the Reagan-Bush years.

"As far as activism goes," he says, "I've always felt like a foot soldier. Music has its place in any kind of struggle, as a rallying cry. But it's not a vanguard thing. You don't write a song and expect millions of people to turn up. Songs have to connect with something that people are already dealing with."

The problem now is that the US government has become expert in what Noam Chomsky calls "the manufacture of consent": "A great many people tried to keep the United States from invading Nicaragua as they had in Panama and Grenada. In the Pentagon, they got so much opposition to a war in Nicaragua that now they just don't tell you about the next one until it's happened and they've brought it to you with a designer name: Desert Storm. They're getting better and better at presenting their agenda to the American people."

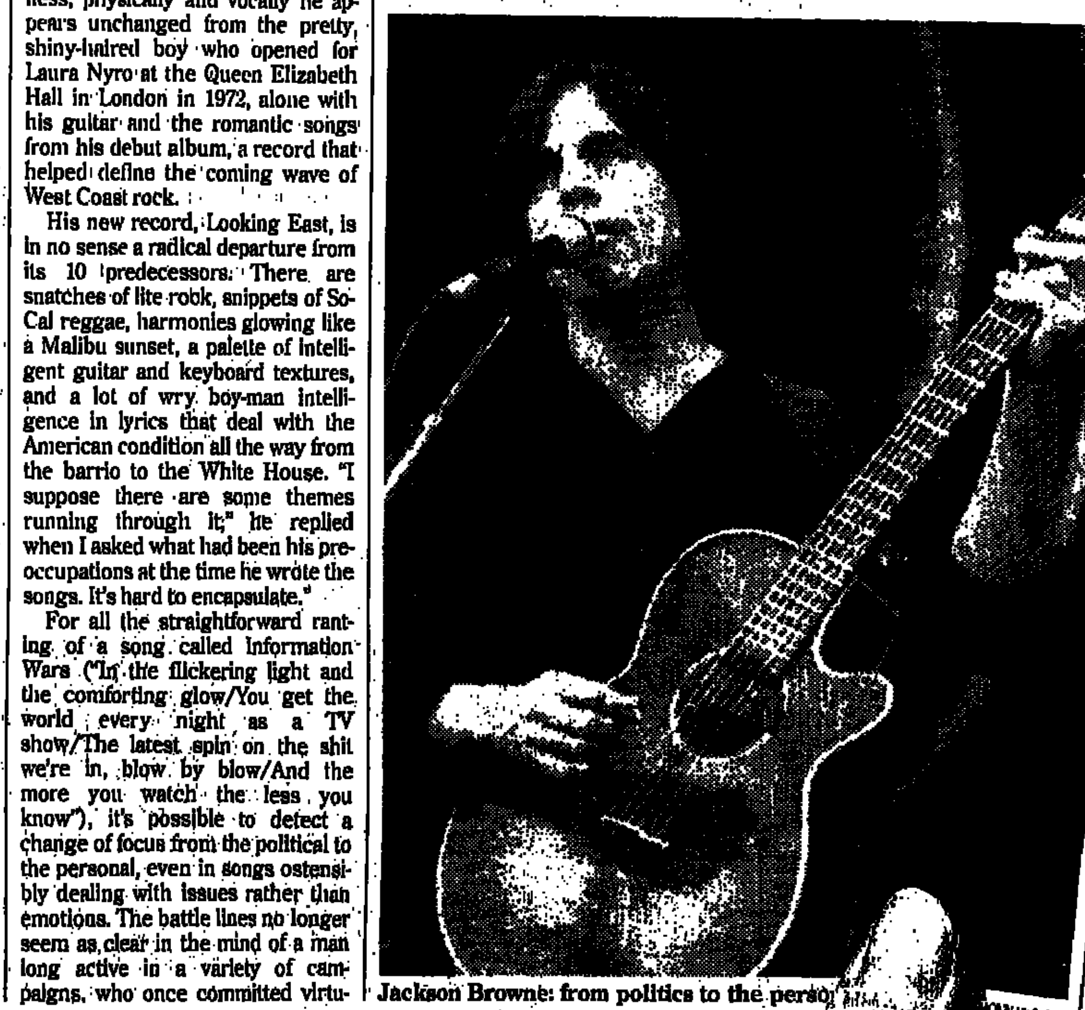
Many of the parameters of his job have changed, and it is not always easy to adjust to the new realities. "I know that when my record company asks me to go on a morning TV show, they're thinking, 'That's where his audience is. They've got kids, they're awake giving them the Pop Tarts and orange juice and putting them on the school bus.' I have no idea if that's true. I certainly don't think that by going on Good Morning America I've sold any more records. I try to update, because you have to reach an audience which is constantly renewing itself. I think my records are more lyric-oriented than most of the music out there. That's something that was more prevalent in the seventies. But lots of other people do that now, too.

"I could be doing other things at this point," he says. "But I love making music. It still does the same thing for me, which is to clarify things and help me take my bearings. It's still as big a challenge to get to the heart of the matter and find out what's going on inside me and in the world. And it's a pleasure being with the people you get to work with."

In the early eighties he could sell five million copies of an album. Those days are gone, but it is hard to leave the expectations behind. "I don't expect to sell that many now, but I'd like to sell more than I do. It's not the measuring stick for me, although I recognise that with Lives In The Balance I would like to have reached a lot more people because I was trying to add my voice to a chorus and change US policy. If that had sold five million records, it would have been wonderful. In fact it didn't sell very many."

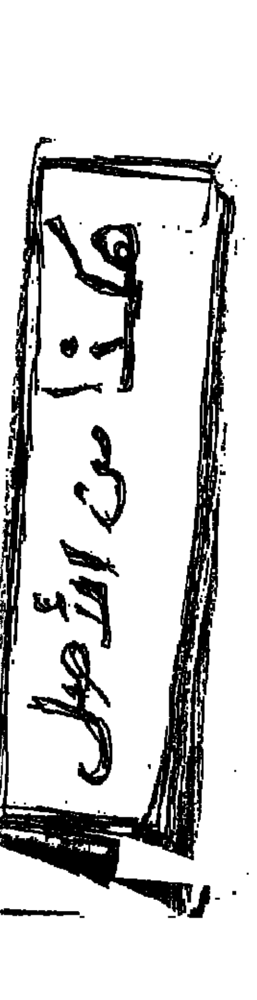
NOWADAYS his activism takes place on a more intimate scale. He still gets angry quickly when he starts talking about "arseholes like Dole and Gingrich", and at Christmas he sent his friends a book published by Fairness And Accuracy In Reporting, a media watchdog organisation with a left-liberal temperament, cataloguing the distortions propagated by the right-wing pundit Rush Limbaugh. But his real involvement is with the music programmes of a couple of Los Angeles schools, finding recording work and donating time in his studio for a gospel choir at one and helping with hardware for the instrumental players at the other.

Prolonged exposure to gospel music has not turned him into a believer but it has made him think about what the world needs. "For someone like myself, not a Christian, to recognise the talent, the inspiration and the brilliance in that choir, well, eventually even I have to recognise that this is about God. Political solutions have to begin with some sort of personal enlightenment, and I think that most people in my country are in need of some illumination. And I include myself."





Jackson Browne: from politics to the perso



Science for the uninitiated

Tim Radford

A Bedside Nature: Genius and Eccentricity in Science 1869-1953
Edited by Walter Gratzer
Macmillan Magazines
280pp £19.95

NATURE is a magazine with a long history and a quite unassailable position as the world's most distinguished science journal. In this bedside compilation, Walter Gratzer demonstrates something quite unexpected. It could also be one of the world's most diverting journals.

Open at random. Page 80 has the tail-end of the calculation of a complex new algorithm for determining the day of the week for any known calendar date. "I am not a rapid computer myself," says the author, "and as I find my average time for doing any such question is 20 seconds, I have little doubt that a rapid computer would not need 15".

The algorithm, which would take most people 20 minutes to remember, let alone operate, is signed by Lewis Carroll. Im-mediately after comes a short announcement of the death of Alexander Borodin, professor of chemistry at the Medico-Surgical Academy at St Petersburg, and, of course, even better known as a composer.

This is followed by a brisk account of the proposals of Monsieur Arnaudeau for a double postal tube, one metre wide, running between Dover and Calais. Along each tube would run a little train of 10 to 15 wagons on rails driven by "compressed and rarefied air, actuating a piston".

A certain P G Tait devotes much thought to the physics of golf; there is a short news report about plans by Dr Fridtjof Nansen, of the Bergen Museum, to cross the interior of Greenland on skis ("viz. the snow runners found so advantageous during the last Nordenskjold expedition across that continent.") And, in the last column on page 81, there is Thomas Henry Huxley taking a meat cleaver to the quivering carcass of the Duke of Argyll: "As fast as old misrepresentations are refuted," he writes, "new ones are evolved out of the inexhaustible inaccuracy of his Grace's imagination."

All this treasure is on two consecutive pages of a work which opens with an editorial by Darwin's bulldog, Huxley, and closes with a letter on the molecular structure of nucleic acids, by J D Watson and F H Crick, which contains the immortal understatement: "It has not escaped our notice that the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material."

In between, there are extraordinary jewels. Someone describes the first Remington type-writing machine; someone else ponders the chemistry of human cremation. H G Wells pops up again and again, directly or indirectly, opining here on land transport, there on racist nonsense.

There is a report of an exhibition of bed hangings made from Madagascar spider's silk by the Antananarivo Technical School. Ernest Rutherford weighs in on the structure of the atom, Francis Galton sits for his portrait twice and each time counts the number of brush strokes ("It made me wonder whether painters had mastered the art of getting the maximum result from their labour"). Frederick Soddy laments that the education system favours learning of the classics, but not of science.

There is a 1938 reprint from a German journal warning that science represents the key position from which "intellectual Judaism can always regain a significant influence on all spheres of national life".

So this Jewish spirit should be purged. French prisoners of war in Oflag XVIIA founded their own University of Edelbach and did a thorough geological examination of the 400-metre-square region inside the barbed wire, and of course, under it.

Nature is, of course, still in business, more widely circulated than ever. It is not, however, more widely read by ordinary mortals, being mostly incomprehensible.

A pity: in the very first extract, Huxley has someone say: "The priests of Science must consent to use the vernacular, before they will ever make a profound impression upon the heart of humanity." There is a foreword by that votary of the vernacular, Stephen Jay Gould.

He thinks Professor Gratzer's handiwork is terrific too.

Lonely traveller

John Sturrock

Zola: A Life
by Frederick Brown
Macmillan 888pp £25

EMILE ZOLA believed that hard work was the answer; it had saved him and it would save society. His next to last book was called, all too simply, Travail, and was meant for a novel, the third of four planned to serve as progressive "gospels" for the new 20th century. Travail is today defunct both as fiction and as a sermon. It came from the side of Zola we forget about, from the spiritual dictator who hardly seems to fit with the profane realist glorying in the output of what his *bien-pensant* critics called "putrid literature".

This wasn't a description that caused Zola any grief because rottenness is what the best of his novels (L'Assommoir, Nana) are about. His big theme — a topical one in France in the years of his literary prime — is that of degeneration. Born in 1840, he came to believe that the national stock was running morally and physically down, and many of his plots illustrate this concern, tracking the fortunes of a single family. These are the Rougon-Macquarts, a demonic brood who, in the 20 novels in which they appear, display all the grosser appetites of the age.

The Rougon-Macquarts are dragged fatally down by the *bête humaine*, or a congenital flaw that is Zola's medical textbook version of Original Sin. Yet the novel cycle also has its nobler episodes and its unlikely altruists, illustrating that Zola was not looking exclusively on the black side. And it is one of the successes of Frederick Brown's new biography that he brings both Zolas, the virtuoso of putrescence and the social visionary, so seamlessly together.

Zola wasn't so much a contradictory figure, as one who was often misleading (or else misled) when he said what his intentions were as a novelist. He was a Romantic who couldn't bear to be thought of as one. Romanticism was limp, dreamy, obsolete; he, in contrast, would be tough, factual, modern, a Naturalist writer and, as such, the implacable servant of the "truth". The truth necessarily meant all the terrible things that go on in society which are normally kept from view, and because the Naturalist had to be "scientific", in keeping with the times he lived in, he would show these things without comment, as if his silence were a further gauge of their authenticity.

This doctrine meant that Zola — until he later relented and turned gospeller — could not be the overtly moral or political novelist that his master in fiction, Balzac, had been: Balzac thought that a degenerate France needed a king and the church; Zola thought that it was well rid of the one and science would inevitably rid it of the other. He was a positivist in his philosophy and a Republican in his politics.

But to stay with any one party was unthinkable. Zola travelled alone. Brown quotes from the robust journalism that Zola wrote during his life. After the vicious suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871 Zola reported from Versailles on the parliamentary proceedings of the incipient Third Republic.

He did so with contempt at their dishonesty and their ignorance. If Zola belonged anywhere politically it was on the left, but over the years the left had been just as rough in denouncing his novels as the right. Zola damned the lot of them.

A familiar intellectual position: except that Zola seemed to think that he should have the influence and publicity that went to the politicians. By 1879, eight years into the new régime, he was declaring that "The Republic will live or the Republic will not live depending on whether it accepts or rejects our method. The Republic will be naturalist, or not be at all" — an embarrassing piece of megalomania. And 20 years later, when he became a world hero for his intervention — the front-page blast known as J'Accuse — on behalf of the unjustly convicted Captain Dreyfus, there was a telling failure to separate the fate of the unfortunate Jewish officer from his own. "May my works perish if Dreyfus is not innocent."

Zola did well by Dreyfus (and Dreyfus did well by Zola) enabling him to play a role Brown shows him as having played throughout his life: of self-righteous rescuer of the hard done-by.

The first was his own father, a Venice-born engineer who was robbed posthumously of both money and prestige by the authorities of Aix-en-Provence, until his famous son won a belated recognition for him. His father's death when he was only seven meant that Zola and his mother lived in poverty for years in Paris. When he finally had money he bought land and a house in Médan, and lived the life of a vulgar, riverine bourgeois, forever building on extra rooms and then overfurnishing them (and himself: his waist measurement went up to 45 inches).

ZOLA DIED in 1902, at 62, poisoned by carbon monoxide escaping from a blocked flue. Many at the time thought it was murder, that the flue had been tampered with by anti-Dreyfusards. It's a possibility: a stove-fitter reportedly confessed to the crime on his death-bed in 1927.

But if myth attaches to Zola's death, his life was the reverse of mythical. It was nothing but travail. He wrote four pages every day, with few crossings out; and before he began a novel, he informed himself in the way a "scientist" should.

He went to places he meant to write about — down a coal-mine before starting on Germinal — or talked to those who had been there. He wouldn't let up because he was afraid he would lapse into indolence, the same degenerative flaw that dogged the Rougon-Macquarts.

Behind his industry there lay, by his own account, chronic self-doubt. He alternated between the certainty that he was a genius and the other certainty that he was nothing.

Frederick Brown gives us Zola in full, the vociferous public man and the neurotic, inhibited private one. Eight hundred pages are a lot, but then Zola didn't stint when he wrote, so his biographer can say in his defence that he could but be true to his subject.

ILLUSTRATION: C LEANDRE, FROM THE COMIC MAGAZINE LE RIRE, 1897

Removed from the real world

Laura Tennant

The Insult
by Rupert Thomson
Bloomsbury 416pp £15.99

IMAGINATION isn't a word much used these days, with regard to novelists. We tend to associate it with Romanticism, or the fairy dusting of magic realism, but certainly not with harsh contemporary concerns. Serious novelists, the wisdom goes, have to situate their books in the real world. Rupert Thomson possesses a powerful creative talent which frees him from such constraints.

He has an extraordinary capacity to construct a parallel universe — tantalisingly reminiscent of our own while being governed, as it were, by slightly different rules. The result is a form of hyper-realism, an intensity of gaze which gives his recreated worlds a shocking freshness.

Place has been central to all Thomson's novels but they are also disconcertingly unstable and non-specific. Dreams Of Leaving, his first book, imagines a village in England as a mini-state cut off from all contact with the outside world; The Five Gates Of Hell takes place in a fictional city, in what we guess to be America, which specialises in funeral parlours; and Air And Fire gives a surreal twist to 19th-century Mexico. Reading them, the lack of any fixed geographical reference points makes you uncertain of your moral standpoint. Thomson also tends to create despicable characters, only to imbue them with an emotional complexity, making a glib response impossible.

The Insult, we gather, is set in some bleak East European city and later in the country's primitive hinterland. Its hero, Blom, is blinded in a shooting but then miraculously recovers his sight and falls in love with the elusive Nina. When Nina disappears he embarks on a mission to find her, but instead becomes the unwilling recipient of a tale of intergenerational incest and murder, which is confessed to him by the owner of a hotel, Mrs Hekmann, in Nina's home village.

Stories of absence, from Nina's disappearance to Blom's missing sight, fill these pages and find an echo in our nagging sense that the entire book is a hallucination on the part of the hospitalised Blom. The writing, as ever with Thomson, is wonderful, the conclusions most uncomfortable.

The lost tribe of Europe

Julia Pascal

Vanishing Diaspora: the Jews in Europe Since 1945
by Bernard Wasserstein
Hamish Hamilton 332pp £20

THIS book is an obituary for modern European Jewry. Bernard Wasserstein suggests that what the Nazis began in 1933 continues today as a suicidal journey towards the oblivion of assimilation. He believes intermarriage and apathy will soon reduce Jews to an exotic memory of a lost tribe, like the American Indians.

Although his thesis is not original, this social and political modern history of post-war European diaspora Jewry is. Surprisingly, it is the first such study to appear in print. Born in London in 1948, Wasserstein traces his generation's experience across European borders. His viewpoint is secular, liberal and, occasionally, healthily angry. Vanishing Diaspora sometimes reads like a thriller.

Why, after Auschwitz, does the Jewish Question refuse to disappear? Although he poses the question, Wasserstein never fully answers it and, oddly enough at the end of Chapter Five (Facing The Past), accuses modern Jewry of "an almost necrophiliac obsession with the Holocaust". This statement denies Bruno Bettelheim's assertion that those who cannot bury their dead remain petrified with unresolved grief.

Warsaw worship: few Jews survived German and Polish anti-Semitism

The overall effect of Wasserstein's examination shows how awkwardly most of Europe dealt with the Nazi past. British attitudes are as complex as those of Britain's Nazi-occupied neighbours. Churchill swung from an ardent belief in the necessary punishment of war criminals to deciding it was better "to draw a sponge across the crimes and horrors of the past".

For most Jews, Poland is one of the most troubling of countries. How can post-Holocaust Poland, without its Jews, remain one of the most anti-Semitic of European nation states? Wasserstein blames the Church for erecting Catholic memorials in Auschwitz and shows how anti-Semitism was encouraged by the warring institutions of the Catholic church and the Communist ruling party. He also acknowledges the complexity of modern Poland and ultimately refuses to see the country merely in terms of dual anti-Semitic powers, quoting the Polish Catholic Jerzy Turowicz's sensitive message to his Church: "Auschwitz represents for the Jews . . . the symbol of the passivity of other nations in the face of their destruction." Left and right also appear as anti-semitic partners in France.

Nearly 30 years later, Wasserstein reveals a modern republic glorying in its image as a bastion of tolerance and secular revolutionary values while functioning as a centralised, still-Catholic imperial power. François Mitterrand's death certainly incarnates the difference between rhetoric and reality. It was only while dying of cancer that he confessed his fascist past. Mitterrand's extraordinary funeral reinforced this schizophrenia. The self-proclaimed agnostic arranged for two simultaneous funeral masses. On television the French watched the Jewish Archbishop of Paris, Monsignor Lustiger (converted to Catholicism as a child in hiding), celebrate the journey of Mitterrand's sanctified soul to paradise.

Collision of freedoms

Roy Hattersley

The Age of Rights
by Norberto Bobbio
Polity 168pp £45 hbk £12.95 pbk

THERE is no doubt about the basic principle which dominates the essays that make up The Age Of Rights. It is asserted time after time in the text. "The fundamental problem concerning human rights today is not so much how to justify them but how to protect them." That problem, Norberto Bobbio insists, is "political not philosophical". However, he still plays the philosophical game. Is it, he asks, possible to define those freedoms which, having been morally and intellectually justified, should be universally accepted and respected? He comes to what, at first, seems a gloomy conclusion. There are so many ways of defining "inalienable rights" and so many theories of how they are derived, that it is virtually impossible to create an objective test against which the conduct of all governments should be measured.

But do not despair. The impossibility of setting out a cogent and convincing list of essential freedoms does not prevent the world from becoming a better place. "It cannot be said that human rights were much respected during the period when the learned all agreed that they had found an irrefutable argument for their defence." In any case, "the strongest argument presented by reactionaries in all countries against human rights . . . is not their foundations, but their impracticability". So we have a professor of philosophy arguing that theoretical speculation is less important than practical action, promotion, monitoring and guarantees. But some of the conceptual problems remain and practice can only be improved by understanding the theory. It is "safeguards within the state" which are the main feature of the current phase. "Safeguards against the state" are more difficult to achieve "without an international jurisdiction able to impose itself on national jurisdictions". Until that exists, the British government will be able to reject the adjudication of the European Court of Human Rights.

It is the obsession with independence that impedes supra-national supervision of the way in which civil rights are protected. So, as far as a universal code of rights is concerned, the 19th century gave with one hand and took away with the other. It was also the age of enlightenment which complicated the debate with the belated discovery that there are positive as well as negative freedoms.

If (with Kant) we believe that the only inalienable right is freedom, and (like Hobbes and Spinoza) we define that ideal condition as the absence of restraint, all the rights arguments fall neatly into place. But once we begin to talk about "freedom to" as well as "freedom from", the issue becomes more complicated. For freedoms collide. In short, helping the poor penalises the rich. That creates a major dilemma for radical politicians who want to win elections in an affluent society.

There will not be a genuine radical revival in Britain until those who claim to be in the vanguard of such movements take an interest in the principles by which their conduct should be guided.

All our yesterdays

J G Ballard

The Day Before Yesterday: Five Million Years of Human History
by Colin Tudge
Cape 390pp £18.99

NOWHERE is the human sense of time so out of step with the real clocks that turn our world as in the field of evolutionary biology. For most of us the day before yesterday is a fading memory of meals, phone calls and parking tickets. But as Colin Tudge points out in his vast history of humanity, in terms of human evolution, yesterday is the past 40,000 years, when our species became its present self, and the day before yesterday is the 5 million years during which we evolved from our most primitive ancestors.

Tudge, a zoologist and prize-winning science writer, quotes George Santayana's "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it", and applies this to our evolutionary past, pointing out that nothing in the future is fixed.

For the past 50 million years the Earth has been steadily cooling, despite a few brief tropical reversals. Climatic shifts have been the main engine of evolutionary change, and the genus *Homo* probably emerged after a burst of planetary cooling 2¼ million years ago. But the gains and losses of climatic change are hard to calculate.

The genus *Homo* became the aggression-driven predator we remain to this day. Tudge describes the controlled outbreaks of vicious temper that sustained our hominid forebears during their attacks on the precursors of zebra and hyena. Aggression, Tudge says, is a survival tactic for raising the physiological tempo and focusing the mind at times of danger.

The ability to make weapons and thus magnify the power of their aggressive drives laid down the blueprint for the species who followed. *Homo habilis*, "handy man" and the oldest member of the genus *Homo*, was a primitive toolmaker, fashioning clubs and axe-heads. This compact between brain and hand Tudge sees as perhaps the most significant feed-back loop in the lifetime of our planet.

A rapid acceleration of brain capacity took place, and *Homo sapiens*, the first modern man, appeared in Africa some 120,000 years ago and began his migration into Europe and Asia. By the end of the Pleistocene, roughly 8000BC, he had colonised most of the world's great land masses.

But our brains had evolved to deal with the outside world, and have not been selected, Tudge emphasises, to cope with introspection, as our failure to understand our own consciousness confirms.

Lastly, Tudge asks, what are the chances of *Homo sapiens* lasting another million years? Over-population, he maintains, is still our biggest threat, but material acquisitiveness may be even more dangerous. The necessary plundering of the Earth's resources may lead to devastating climatic changes. A desperate reining-in needs to take place, Tudge believes, or the planet may suffer immense damage thousands of years into the future. But whether human beings, who have harnessed fire and flown to the Moon, can also tell the real time is open to serious doubt.

Thrillers

Chris Petit

Done Deal, by Les Standiford (Macmillan, £15.99)

FLORIDA must boast more classy crime writers per square mile than anywhere on earth. Here's another, writing that tight, shruggy, slightly illiterate prose in the manner of Elmore Leonard; a sure sign that the author is a professor of creative writing. One flaw aside — overlong mourning sequence when the reader knows the hero's wife is still alive — and silly Spillane-like names apart (Deal, Straight), this pushes the right buttons, jazzing up a routine plot — civic corruption, property and baseball scam — with smart vernacular, violence with relish and plenty of stylish attitude.

Truth, by Patrick Dillon (Michael Joseph, £15.99)

ROGUE copper determines to nail his man for murder, by forging his confession, after losing him on a previous charge involving a senseless thrill killing of a tramp. This try-hard first novel has some of the late Derek Raymond's preoccupations — violence and the absurd, obsessive revenge, dodgy property deals, class counter jumping, London as rat run, metropolitan anomie — but lacks his revenant's imagination and visionary sadism.

Plot Twist, by Eric Adams (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)

FAIR premise, sledge-hammer irony, and a case of the biter bit when an unscrupulous true crime-journo has his son kidnapped and suffers heavy privacy invasion. The ransom note demands his severed hands for little Timmy's safety, but the neatness of the conceit falters and the novice novelist's inexperience shows — silliness and false suspense the result.

The Serpent's Tail, by Martin Dillon (RCB, £8.99)

DILLON, known for gritty documentary books on the Northern Ireland conflict, uses material from his The Dirty War for a first novel with a detailed grasp of the mind-boggling things done in the name of secrecy, here an ingenious sting pulled off by British intelligence in 1974 at the expense of the Provisionals. Two youths turned by the security forces are used to infiltrate the IRA and plant disinformation to discredit the hardline leadership.

The Day of Wrath, by Daniel Easterman (HarperCollins, £15.99)

EAST meets West when leading Muslims at a Dublin conference get kidnapped by Christian fundamentalists whose dead leader, known from 1993's world headlines, is found still alive and twice as barking. A routine chase is enlivened by rivalries and unpredictable alliances.

Chess Leonard Barden

POOR starts and nervous finishes are the bane of tournament players. Boris Spassky used to lose first rounds, blaming his "slow emotions", until he cured himself by playing clock exhibitions against candidate masters a few days beforehand.

A final-round defeat in a title or qualifying event can trigger the nervous-finish syndrome, as happened to Bronstein in the 1958 interzonal or to Hubner in his 1971 match with Petrosian. And if I could have stopped British championships at chosen times between rounds six and 10, I would have had three outright titles instead of just one shared.

Michael Adams displayed a new and mysterious chess disease recently at Zurich, Groningen and the Hoogovens tournament in Wijk-aan-Zee. Collapsing with losses in mid-tournament, he suddenly revived with a series of wins. Find a cure, Michael, and you won't have to worry about too few invitations.

Adams-Dreev, Wijk 1996, French 3 Nd2

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 exd5 Qxd5 5 Ngf3 cxd4 6 Bc4 Qd6 7 0-0 Nf6 8 Nb3 Nc6 9 Nbxd4 Nxd4 10 Nxd4 a6 11 Re1 Qc7 12 Bb3 Bd6 13 Nf5 Bxh2+ 14 Kh1 0-0 15 Nxg7 Apparently spectacular, but this is still well-trodden ground. If Kxg7 16 g3 Bxg3 17 Rg1 favours White.

Rd8 16 Qf3 Kxg7 17 Bh6+ Kg6 Kxh6? loses to 18 Qxf6+ Kh5 19 Re3. **18 c3 Nd5 19 Rad1!** The game really starts, and effectively finishes, with this improvement on the book 19 Bc1.

White's attack is worth more than a single piece. Adams may well have a reputation for homespun theory, but he's the world's leading expert on the white side of the 3 Nd2 c5 French.

f5 If Kxh6 20 Bxd5 Rxd5 21 Rxd5 exd5 22 Qf6+ Kh5 23 g3 and Re5+ wins. **20 Bc1 Bd6 21 Bxd5 exd5 22 Rxd5 Bd7 23 Qh3 Bf8 24 Re3 Kg7 25 Rg3+ Kh8 26 Qh4 Be6 27 Bf4 Be7 28 Bxc7 Resigns.** If Bxh4 29 Be5+ mates.

Adams-Hubner, Wijk 1996, Sicilian 2 c3

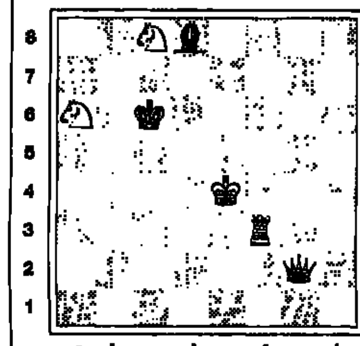
1 e4 c5 2 c3 An English speciality, whose secrets will be revealed later this year in a new book by Murray Chandler. **d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 Bg4 6 Nbd2 Nc6 7 Bc4!?** A new concept in place of 7 dxc5 or 7 Be2. White's K-side pawns are wrecked, but he has a big lead in development.

Bxf3 8 gxf3 Qg5?! Qd6 looks better. As played, White gains more time by harassing the Q. **9 Ne4 Qf5 10 Qe2 e6 11 Ng3 Qh3 12 d5 Nd8 13 Bb5+** Trapping the BK in the centre. **Nd7 14 Bf4 a6 15 Bxd7+ Kxd7 16 0-0-0 Ke8 17 Rhe1 Be7 18 d6 Bf6 19 d7+ Kf8 20 Rd5!** More attacking options on the fifth rank.

g6 21 Bd6+ Kg8 22 Nh5 Bg7 If gxh5 23 Rg1+ Bg7 24 Rdg5. **23 Rxc5 Nc6 24 Rxc6! bxc6 25 Qxa6!** Black's game is hopeless with a boxed K-side and emigrant queen, and Adams finishes in style.

Bh6+ 26 f4 Rd8 27 Qc8 Qh4 28 Bc7 Rf8 29 d8Q Qxh5 30 Qxf8+ Bxf8 31 Bd6 Resigns. If Kg7 32 Be5+ f6 33 Qd7+ wins.

No 2409



White mates in three, against any defence (by A Mossiawili, 1973). This can be hard to crack, but for a clue think back to our Christmas puzzle.

No 2408: 1 Nc3 (threats 2 Rd4, Nd5 or Ne2) Kxe5 2 Rd5. Traps are 1 Re7? Qb2 or 1 Rc5? Qh8 or 1 Nd4? Nxd2.

A pleasant train of thought



Colin Luckhurst

SOME years ago BBC television broadcast a series of programmes on Sunday evenings featuring some of the great railway journeys of the world.

I particularly remember Michael Frayn travelling the long desert width of Australia, with camels running from the track and kicking up clouds of red dust in the blistering heat as the train headed for Perth.

There were rides on the Orient Express and the Trans-Siberian, as well as the Canadian Pacific Railway. They all made good travel documentaries, spiced up by the personalities who narrated them.

At a rather more modest level, I derived my own pleasure from a railway journey from the station at Bristol Temple Meads (where evidence remains of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's original vision) to Dorchester West.

A return costs only £16 and, given the historic tract of south-west England through which the line passes, it's not bad value, especially if — a rare treat this — it actually sticks to the published timetable.

The view from the train of Limpley Stoke Valley, between Bath and Bradford-on-Avon, where the railtrack runs parallel with both the Avon river and the Kennet and Avon Canal, is as pleasant as any in rural England.

No wonder Chris Patten, the governor of Hong Kong, has a home there (his residency dates from before he lost his seat in Bath at the last general election).

But the start of that section is now changed for ever by the massive roadworks which will one day sweep across the water meadows to the east of Bath.

I was a member of the planning committee of Bath city council when the proposal went through the consultative procedures in the late 1980s.

With growing traffic volumes and the misery of the residents of Batheaston it was difficult to imagine an alternative. But the brutal gash of the earthworks, bitterly fought by the army of protesters (who have since moved on to Newbury via the M3) has certainly ruined that stretch of countryside.

Just before the valley, the train slides through Bath, the elegant Georgian terraces of which can be admired from one's carriage as it passes by.

The train carries on to Frome and Bruton (and Sexey's School, a name guaranteed to amuse generations of young scholars). It passes a Saxon hilltop town, which can still be seen, and Castle Cary, travelling through green country dedicated to livestock farming.

After Evercreech Junction, the line balances precariously on the edge of the gentle hills above the Somerset Levels, Yeovil Pen Mill and then a series of three halts where the timetable is marked with an "x" to indicate that the train will stop by request. Otherwise, it rolls through Thornford, Yetminster and Chetnole — fine Wessex place names — before Maiden Newton and then Dorchester West.

THERE is just a sniff of an older England available on this route, including some gracious stone buildings and evidence of long-term harmonious settlement of the land.

Just past Maiden Newton there are some second world war fortifications beside the track, including a tank trap and machine gun blockhouse built to fight an invasion force landing on the Dorset coast.

That particular threat of invasion has long passed, of course, but the Ministry of Defence keeps its hand in by reserving to this day large stretches of coast near Lulworth for the military to play war games.

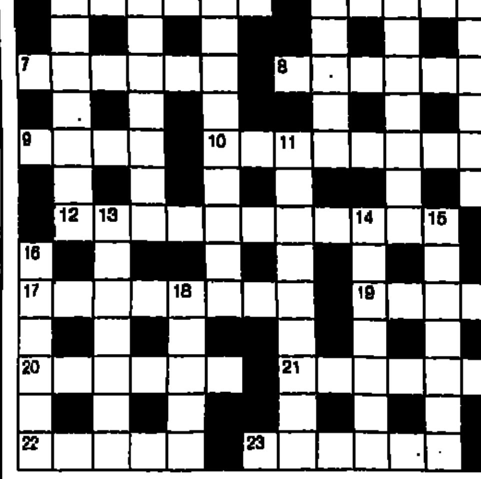
Quick crossword no. 302

Across

1 Conflict (6)
4 Viper (5)
7 Follow (6)
8 Lottery (6)
9 Smear — to obscure (4)
10 Carnage (8)
12 Tame (11)
17 Restricted (8)
19 Reverberate (4)
20 Bower (6)
21 Mean (6)
22 Succeed (5)
23 Heavy, starchy food (6)

Down

1 Foul (7)
2 Platform (7)
3 Lodge member (9)
4 Accumulate (5)
5 Loss (7)
6 Danced — and swam (6)
11 Sea spray (9)
13 Large volume — of public transport? (7)
14 Warded off (7)
15 Intensify (7)
16 Jam — thinly applied? (6)
18 Become hardened to (5)



Last week's solution



Bridge Zia Mahmood

***THIS* was the final problem in last year's Christmas Competition.**

It is just before midnight on December 31. The grand slam kitty contains £1,000, but if it is not claimed by the end of the year, it goes to the club proprietor — one E Scrooge.

You therefore open 7NT as South, in the hope that you will have some play for it.

These are the North-South cards:

North	South
♠ 10 7 4 3	♠ A Q 2
♥ A 10 8 6 5 4	♥ Q 3 2
♦ 10 4	♦ A 3 2
♣ 4	♣ A 10 3 2

West leads the king of diamonds, and you make your contract, which was unbeatable after the opening lead. What is West's hand?

I'd like to congratulate the very large number of competitors who managed to solve this problem correctly — most impressive!

See next column for the full deal.

Full deal:

	North	
	♠ 10 7 4 3	
	♥ A 10 8 6 5 4	
	♦ 10 4	
	♣ 4	
West		East
♠ 9 8 6 5		♠ K J
♥ K 9 7		♥ J
♦ K Q J		♦ 9 8 7 6 5
♣ K Q J		♣ 9 8 7 6 5
	South	
	♠ A Q 2	
	♥ Q 3 2	
	♦ A 3 2	
	♣ A 10 3 2	

West needs to have precisely this hand in order for you to be able to cash six heart tricks and operate a progressive squeeze for your 12th and 13th tricks. The end position might be as shown at the top of the next column.

South discards a diamond (or a club) on the last heart, but West cannot move. A club discard allows the ace and 10 of clubs to be cashed, squeezing West in spades and diamonds; a spade discard allows the 10 and seven of spades to be cashed, squeezing West in the

	North	
	♠ 10 7	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 4	
West		East
♠ 9 8		♠ None
♥ None		♥ None
♦ K		♦ 8
♣ K Q		♣ 9 8 7
	South	
	♠ 2	
	♥ None	
	♦ 2	
	♣ A 10 3	

minors; and a diamond discard allows the 10 of diamonds to be cashed, squeezing West in the black suits.

As a number of entrants pointed out, West could have beaten the contract by leading a club instead of a diamond.

The winner of the £100 first prize was Dennis Church, of Haverhill Road, London.

Two runners-up, who won £50 each, were Y K Tsang, of Stoke, and Ross Pickersgill, of Cambridge.

Thanks to all of you who entered — sorry you couldn't all win!

Football FA Cup fifth round: Manchester United 2 Manchester City 1

Penalty leaves Ball seething

David Lacey

MANCHESTER United by a neck. Their progress to a third successive FA Cup final is starting to look inexorable if not inevitable. On Sunday fate first helped them to beat Manchester City with the aid of a harshly judged penalty, and then gave them a highly winnable quarter-final at home to Southampton or Swindon.

Should United go on to win the Cup twice in three seasons, and a record ninth time in all, the sky blue half of Manchester will no doubt be hoping that their celebratory toasts are coupled with the name of Alan Wilkie.

City supporters will always argue that the referee turned this tie with the penalty decision that enabled United to draw level shortly before half-time after they had fallen behind to an early goal from Rösler.

That would be putting it too simply, for United were beginning to get a grip on the play before that moment and would in all probability have dominated the second half in the way they did even if the penalty had not happened.

Butt was outstanding in midfield, and the growing influence on the flanks of Sharpe and Phillip Neville ultimately proved decisive.

There can, however, be little doubt that luck smiled on United at a crucial moment. In the 38th minute, following a corner on the left from Giggs, Keane's header was cleared off the line by a combination of Immel and Brown. Another corner followed, and then the penalty.

This time Giggs swung the ball across too hard and high for anyone in the goalmouth to reach it. Frontzeck and Cantona jumped together as a matter of routine but



Fever pitch . . . Quinn and Butt battle it out at Old Trafford

made only brief contact with one another. In the next instant, however, Wilkie was pointing to the penalty spot. Both teams appeared baffled, Old Trafford could not believe its good fortune, and Cantona sent Immel the wrong way with his kick.

"Eric said he was pulled round the neck," said Alex Ferguson, the United manager. "It's always a risk if you pull players around the neck." In fact Wilkie gave this as the reason for his decision.

Naturally, being Alan Ball, the losing manager was rather more loquacious on the subject. "Would he have given it at the other end?" he asked. "No?" Exactly.

In the opening half-hour United were unable to get to grips with City's close-passing game and whenever Kinkladze gained possession generous avenues of space opened up in the approaches to goal.

During this period Bruce and Pallister looked vulnerable in United's defence. Keane and Butt, moreover, were being upstaged in midfield by Lomas and Brown while Clough's little passes kept City's rhythm consistent.

After 11 minutes City went ahead with a goal cleverly conceived and executed. Kinkladze turned with the ball and in the same movement released it low through a square United defence.

Rösler bore down on the advancing Schmeichel and then chipped him from just inside the penalty area. The goalkeeper managed to get a hand to the ball, but could not keep it out.

Midway through the first half Ferguson switched his wings, a crucial move for Sharpe and Giggs made better headway on opposite flanks. City were still worrying United with the accuracy of their passing but were steadily ceding territory and possession before the penalty.

The second half saw much less of Kinkladze and practically nothing of Clough. United, moreover, played with the patience of a team who suspected the afternoon would eventually be theirs.

With 13 minutes remaining, Pallister found Giggs on the left and he released Neville for the low centre that Sharpe turned smartly into the net. "No complaints about the second half," said Ball, "it was a great goal that beat us."

Wilkie booked four United and two City players, with half the yellow cards being flourished after an early argy-bargy. He was the referee whose dismissal of Cantona at Crystal Palace preceded the Frenchman's kung-fu activities. Cantona may now have a softer spot for Wilkie than he did.

Cricket World Cup: England v New Zealand

Farsley lad rumbles England

Edward Harris in Ahmedabad

RAY ILLINGWORTH always argues that Farsley Cricket Club and the tough Bradford League, where he cut his teeth, provide the best possible grounding for a young player.

Much as Illingworth might enjoy being proved right again, it must have pained the England manager last week to watch the latest Farsley product push his side to a sixth successive one-day defeat.

This time it was not South Africa and the hostile thrusts of Allan Donald but Ahmedabad and the gentle probings of New Zealand. However, the performance and result were just as miserable.

England lost their World Cup opener by 11 runs and the architect of New Zealand's unexpected success was 24-year-old Nathan Astle who, unlike many of the rebuilt Kiwi side, was not unknown to Illingworth.

England's manager has seen plenty of the well-organised opener at Farsley. Astle, who spent two summers improving his cricket education at the club, could have been stopped dead in his tracks on one, but Graham Thorpe failed to hold on to a low slip chance in Dominic Cork's second over of the day. Astle went on to score 101 — his fourth century in his last 11 one-day internationals.

Thorpe's drop was the most difficult of four chances put down by England. "The missed catches were vital," said England's captain Mike Atherton. "We could have had them two for two at one stage. The fielding was poor but I don't think our general performance — the batting and the bowling — could be faulted that much"

Thorpe also dropped the other New Zealand opener Craig Spearman on one while Atherton and Cork spilled sitters that, while not costly, were symptomatic of a team whose fielding is at best a handicap and at worst a liability.

Atherton had gambled against Illingworth's instincts and decided to bowl first. The result was a total of 239 for six — the highest made at the Motera Stadium in a one-day international on the notoriously slow pitch.

The result should make little difference to England's chances of reaching the quarter-finals and victories against the United Arab Emirates on Sunday — UAE lost by eight wickets — and Holland later this week will probably see them through.

Defeat, however, was, as Illingworth agreed, "a blow to the pride. We expected to beat New Zealand and we didn't."

England's reply was tripped up on leaving the blocks when Atherton was bowled in Dion Nash's first over. The England captain momentarily caused astonishment among the 20,000 crowd by refusing to leave his crease with his leg bail lying on the ground, but they soon cottoned on to the fact that he was staying put to act as a runner for Hick, who had hurt his left hamstring chasing a ball around the boundary.

While Hick was swatting the ball to all parts, victory was always possible. But Neil Fairbrother called for a single, Atherton hesitated when he saw Roger Twose dive to stop at cover, and by the time England's captain set off again it was too late. He — or rather Hick — was run out by a couple of feet on 85. And with the rest of the batting subsiding, that was just about that.

● In other games, Zimbabwe (151-9) lost to the West Indies by six wickets; South Africa (321-2) defeated United Arab Emirates (152-8) by 169 runs; New Zealand (307-8) beat Holland (188-7) by 119 runs, and Kenya (199-6) went down to India by 7 wickets. Australia forfeited their match against Sri Lanka.

Scores: New Zealand 239 for 6; England 228

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Clampdown on drugs

THE NUMBER of drug tests carried out by the Football Association is set to go up by almost 100 per cent next season in a crackdown on substance abuse in the game. Just over 270 tests were carried out last season, four times that of 1994/95. This season the number will be 280 and next season it will be 500.

Huddersfield striker Craig Whittington has become the latest to join the list. He has been charged with misconduct by the association after a second drugs test for cannabis proved positive. The 25-year-old has been suspended by his club and given 14 days to respond to the FA charges.

The failed tests came in the space of 10 months and he faces the prospect of a lengthy ban after becoming the first player to test positive for banned substances on two separate occasions. Roger Stanislaus of Leyton Orient was banned for a year by the FA earlier this month for cocaine use and the club later sacked him.

"We recognise there is a drugs problem in society," said the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, "and we are determined to stop it spreading into the game."

Another footballer falling foul of the FA was Vinnie Jones. The transfer-seeking Wimbledon midfielder was fined £2,000 for his scathing newspaper attack on Chelsea's Dutch import Ruud Gullit and other foreign players, whom he branded "squealers". The Welsh international has been docked an astonishing £26,250 in three years by the FA for his disciplinary excesses.

On the field, Leeds defeated Bolton 1-0 in the fourth round of the FA Cup, and in the replays Port Vale knocked out holders Everton 2-1, Grimsby Town thrashed West Ham 3-0 while Manchester City beat Coventry 2-1. The first leg of the Coca-Cola Cup semi-final between Arsenal and Aston Villa ended in a 2-2 draw.

BOB PAISLEY, the most successful manager in the history of English football, has died in a Merseyside nursing home, aged 77. He played more than 250 League games for Liverpool between 1946 and 1953, but made a far more significant contribution to the club as manager when he reluctantly succeeded Bill Shankly in 1974. The next nine years belonged to the softly-spoken miner's son who led the club to six Championships, three League Cups, three European Cups and a Uefa Cup. He was voted Manager of the Year a record six times.

ROMANIAN soccer star Ilie Dumitrescu plans to take his application for a work permit to the European Court of Justice in an attempt to stay in England if the Department of Employment turns down his appeal this week. He applied for a new permit to enable to move from Tottenham Hotspur to West Ham but his application failed on the rounds that he had not played 75 per cent of his side's first-team games.

DEEP BLUE, the IBM computer, turned an interesting shade of pink with embarrassment after going down to Garry Kasparov in their $400,000 chess match in Philadelphia. In the first contest between brain cells and silicon chips — organised to celebrate 50 years of computers — Kasparov, the 32-year-old world champion, won 4-2, with three wins and two draws to offset the machine's historic victory in the first game.

CRAIG PARRY shot a two-under-par round of 71 for 279 in Melbourne to win the Australian Masters for the third time in five years, finishing two strokes ahead of compatriot Bradley Hughes.

PICABO STREET of America captured her first world title for skiing — in the women's downhill — when she swept down the course at Sierra Nevada, Spain, in 1m 54.06sec. Olympic champion, Katja Seizinger of Germany took the silver medal in 1.54.63, ahead of Street's teammate Hilary Lindh.

THE INTERNATIONAL Hockey Federation has set up a five-member committee to investigate claims that the India v Malaysia match at last month's Olympic qualifying tournament in Barcelona was fixed. It will meet on March 2 and announce its decision the following day.

IT SOUNDED more like the blizzards playing havoc with electricity pylons than Macclesfield Town playing at home, carrying out a substitution, when this announcement was made: Power off and Coates on.

Football results

FA CUP: Fourth round
Shrewsbury 0 Liverpool 4.

Fifth round: Huddersfield 2, Wimbledon 2; Ipswich 1, Aston Villa 3; Man Utd 2, Man City 1; Swindon 1, Southampton 1.

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Chelsea 1, West Ham 2; Middlesbrough 1, Bolton 4; Sheff Wed 1, QPR 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Newcastle (played 25, points 60). 2, Man Utd (26-51); 3, Liverpool (26-49).

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE: First Division Charlton 1, Sheff Utd 1; Crystal Palace 4, Watford 0; Grimsby 0, Reading 0; Leicester 1, Port Vale 1; Luton 1, Millwall 0; Norwich 2, Wolverhampton 3; Portsmouth 2, Sunderland 2; Southend 1, Derby 2; Stoke 1, Birmingham 0; West Brom 1, Tranmere 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Derby (30-65); 2, Charlton (29-50); 3, Stoke (29-45).

Second Division: Bournemouth 1, Blackpool 0; Brentford 2, Bristol C 2; Brighton 2, Crewe 2; Bristol R 1, Rotherham 0; Burnley 3, York 3; Chesterfield 3, Wycombe 1; Oxford Utd 3, Walsall 2; Peterborough 6, Carlisle 1; Stockport 2, Notts County 0; Swansea 0, Hull 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Swindon (27-56); 2, Crewe (27-51). 3, Blackpool (29-51).

Third Division: Barnet 5, Wigan 0; Bury 7, Lincoln 1; Chester 3, Scunthorpe 0; Darlington 1, Mansfield 1; Doncaster 0, Plymouth 0; Exeter 1, Cambridge Utd 0; Gillingham 1, Hereford 1; Leyton Orient 2, Northampton 0; Preston 2, Colchester 0; Rochdale 1, Fulham 1; Scarborough 1, Cardiff 0; Torquay 0, Hartlepool 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Gillingham (30-60); 2, Preston (29-54). 3, Chester (28-47).

TENNENTS SCOTTISH CUP: Fourth round
Airdrie 2, Forfar 2; Dundee Utd 1, Dunfermline 0; Celtic 2, Raith 0; Kilmarnock 1, Hearts 2; St Johnstone 3, Montrose 0; Stenhousemuir 0, Caledonian T 1; Stirling 0, Aberdeen 2.

BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First Division: Clydebank 1, Dumbarton 0. **Leading positions:** 1, Dundee Utd (25-46); 2, Greenock Morton (23-45); 3, Dunfermline (22-44).

Second Division: Queen of South 2, Stranraer 1. **Leading positions:** 1, Stirling (24-52). 2, East Fife (24-46); 3, Berwick (25-41).

Third Division: Albion 2, Cowdenbeath 0; Alloa 0, Arbroath 3; Brechin 0, Ross County 0; Clyde 2, Berwick 1; East Stirling 0, Livingston 3. **Leading positions:** 1, Livingston (24-44); 2, Brechin (25-44); 3, Arbroath (24-41).

